NINTENDO POWER

NINTENDO 3DS
LAUNCH
SPECIAL!

Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition • Ridge Racer 3D • The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D • Kid Icarus: Uprising • Dead or Alive Dimensions • 2010 NP Awards

265
MARCH 2011
SUBSCRIBER EDITION

The SIMS™ 3

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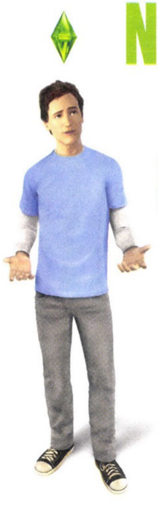
“EVER GET THE FEELING YOU’RE ONLY EATING PIZZA ON THE TOILET AND GETTING IN A SLAP FIGHT WITH A COP AND HOLDING YOUR BIRTHDAY CAKE UNTIL IT BURNS DOWN YOUR HOUSE WHILE YOU’RE DANCING NAKED IN THE MIDDLE OF AN EARTHQUAKE BECAUSE SOMEONE IS MAKING YOU? ME TOO!”



TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Crude Humor
Sexual Themes
Violence

The Sims 3

The Sims 3
NINTENDO 3DS
T
EA

XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE PS3 NINTENDO 3DS Wii EA

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If you want a showcase game for your Nintendo 3DS system, look no further than the amazing Dead or Alive Dimensions.

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The definitive awards for the world of Nintendo are finally here. Check out our (and your!) picks for the best games of 2010.

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THE
2010
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AWARDS

THE 2010 NINTENDO POWER AWARDS 65

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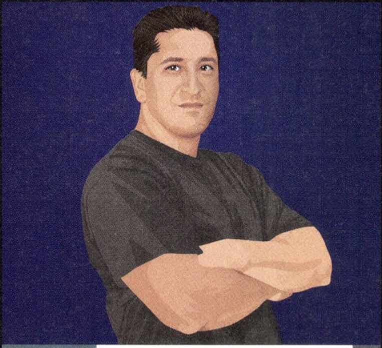

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PHANTOMILE
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RIDGE RACER® 3D

HIGH OCTANE 3D DRIFTING!

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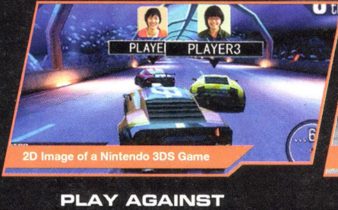
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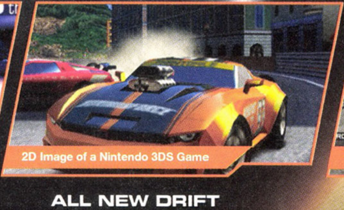
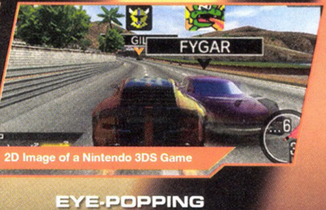
2D Image of a Nintendo 3DS Game

PLAY AGAINST FRIENDS



2D Image of a Nintendo 3DS Game

ALL NEW DRIFT MECHANICS



2D Image of a Nintendo 3DS Game

EYE-POPPING 3D GRAPHICS

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Suggestive Themes

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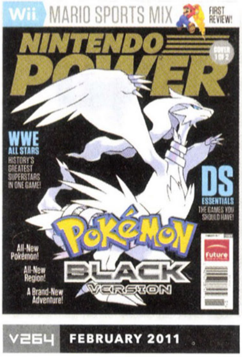
Pulse

Seeing Is Believing

Chris Slate

Nintendo 3DS games look a hundred times better than DS titles even with their 3D effects turned off, but there is simply no way to replicate the full impact of magically seeing 3D visuals without having to wear special glasses. At first it seems impossible that the background behind Ryu and Ken can look as though it stretches into the distance, or that a fluffy puppy can appear to truly exist inside the screen. Even if you conjure up a mental image of the best 3D movie you've ever seen, it won't be the same as peering through the Nintendo 3DS system's top screen into tiny three-dimensional worlds. (Want to see for yourself? check www.nintendo.com/3ds/events to find the nearest demo location.) It's too early to tell if 3D will become the future standard for all video game systems, but it's already clear that the Nintendo 3DS is a major milestone in the history of our favorite hobby. How will the extra dimension change the way we experience virtual worlds? Will traditional flat, 2D games begin to look boring in comparison? It will take a while to find all the answers, but we're ready and eager to start searching.

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**



Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters after preordering about a dozen Nintendo 3DS systems. But first, this month's special letter request: which Nintendo system launch do you most fondly remember, and what made it so special for you? Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

Big the Duke

For your New Year's resolution for Big the Cat, you said that he should drop dead. Well, I think you should know that Jon St. John, the voice actor for badass Duke Nukem, also voices Big. So maybe Big should just be in a coma. —**DAVID E.**

You know, if Big used Duke Nukem's catchphrases, I think we could cut the cat some slack.

Centennial Man

I noticed that Steve Thomason is completely under-appreciated. According to my research, he has been around for a pretty long time (even longer then Chris Slate). Why should Hoffman get a separate section just to pick catfights with people? —**SORA4WII**

I'm going to push past the thought of Hoffman in catfights to jump on the Steve Thomason bandwagon. Not only has this hard-working, Sega-loving guy been at NP for a lot longer than me, but this is the 100th issue that he's worked on. Congrats, Steve! This is an even bigger accomplishment than losing those three pounds with Wii Fit, and it gives me the opportunity to show your "after" picture again....

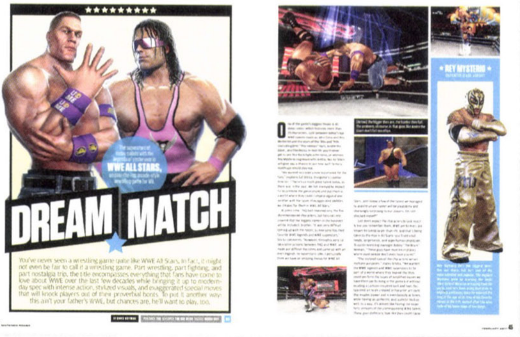
In recognition of his 100th issue of NP, Steve celebrates as he always does: sans pants.

Ninjas Up

In last issue's edition of The Score, how did a whole 18% of readers say that ninja school is a waste of money? According to video games, we're way overdue for an apocalypse of some kind, so those readers may want to give ninja lessons a second thought. —**GRAYSON A.**

I'm with you, Grayson. When the end-times arrive, nobody who skipped ninja school better come crying to me—I'll be too busy running along the wings of robot attack jets, throwing caltrops at alien zombies, and back-flipping into boarded-up burger joints.

To be honest, I almost skipped over your feature on WWE All Stars because I've lost interest in the usual annual wrestling sims. But I'm glad that I decided to read it, because this sounds more like the fast-action wrestling games I used to love back in the day. N64 WWF No Mercy *forever*! —**ROLENTO**



DREAM MATCH

You've never seen a wrestling game quite like WWE All Stars. In fact, it might not even be fair to call it a wrestling game. Part wrestling, part fighting, and part nostalgia trip, the title encompasses everything that fans have come to love about WWE over the last few decades while bringing it up to modern-day spec with intense action, stylized visuals, and exaggerated special moves that will knock players out of their proverbial boots. To put it another way: this ain't your father's WWE, but chances are, he'll want to play, too.

New-Guy Initiation

I'm a new reader, so can you tell me who the heck Dodongo is and where "A Winner Is" comes from? Also, can I find back issues of Nintendo Power anywhere?
—**SAMCHAY TOMYAMGUN**

Dodongo is a boss in several Legend of Zelda games. In the series's very first title, the clue to beating him provided one of 8-bit gaming's most memorable lines: "Dodongo dislikes smoke." Another NES classic, Pro Wrestling, gave us the fan-favorite phrase "A Winner is You," which was proudly displayed after every victory. As for back issues, I'm glad you asked! We now offer them at http://shop.futureus.com. There you can find issues dating back to late 2008, including a couple of newsstand-only specials.

Getting Old

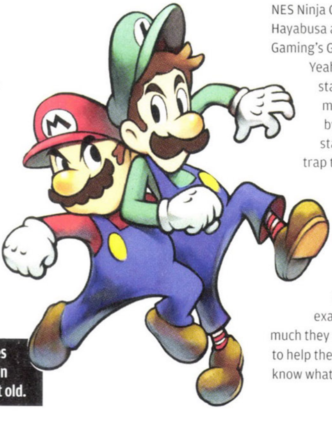
I was incredibly surprised to see Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga featured in Vol. 263's Playback section; it's the first Playback game I have ever played. I am only a teenager and am used to reading about obscure titles that I have never heard of, let alone played. Ah, Nintendo Power, you continue to surprise me every day. —**PETER R.**

Let's face it, Peter—when games you've played start appearing in Playback, you're starting to get old.

All-Star Snub?

I just bought Super Mario All-Stars 25th Anniversary Edition for Wii. While looking through the 32-page history booklet I realized that Super Mario World 2 was omitted—is Yoshi's Island not part of the core Mario franchise? —**E3VL**

Good question! The answer is a little tricky: the original Japanese version of the game was titled Super Mario: Yoshi Island, and was not billed as a direct sequel to Super Mario World. We're not sure why the Super Mario World 2 moniker was added to the North American version, but as you suspected, Yoshi's Island is more of a side story to the core lineage of Mario platformers.



Love Games

I just have to say how much I loved your Gaming's Greatest Couples feature. First of all, it kicked off with a reference to The Beatles, my favorite band in the history of bands. But then—Oh. My. God.—Neku and Shiki! I was glad to see you pay homage to a couple that never actually got together but was in the best game of all time. —**MISSTHEAWESOME**

I cannot believe you, Nintendo Power! In February's Gaming's Greatest Couples feature, you didn't think of poor Professor Layton and Claire. They are the only gaming couple that I have ever cried for! —**KRAZYKID**

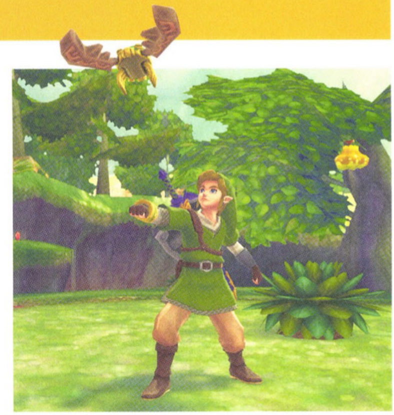
I can't believe that you left the NES Ninja Gaiden trilogy's Ryu Hayabusa and Irene Lew off your Gaming's Greatest Couples list. Yeah, they got off to a rocky start, but Ryu proved how much he cared for Irene by sacrificing demon statues and falling into a trap to save her from being held hostage. And Irene even quit her job, just because she was ordered to kill Ryu and steal the statues. I mean, come on! If those examples don't show how much they would each give up to help the one they love, I don't know what will. —**MARIOMAN**

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

While reading your article about the Mega Man Battle Network and Star Force Complete Works books, I saw, to my horror, Chris Hoffman's mocking comment of "Oh, the horror!" in reference to the lack of a new Star Force game in 2010. I would like a very good reason for this, as the Star Force series is one of my favorites. —**CHARIBLAZE**

The Hoff says: Look, Char, all I was saying is that it might not hurt if Capcom took a year off and tried to revitalize the franchise instead of just cranking out—I'm...I'm sorry, OK? I didn't mean to say bad things about Mega Man. I didn't mean it! Please, Inafune-san, come back to us! I didn't mean to offend you! How could you leave Capcom? How could you leave Mega Man? How could you leave me?! I promise not to besmirch the name of Mega Man anymore, even when he's some freakish alien/human hybrid riding radio waves! Why, Inafune-san, why?! [Falls to his knees and sobs]

I know that some people have probably resolved to play fewer video games, but not me! I plan to play *more*, get tickets to E3 2011, and save up the money for The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword. **—CHARMY BEE**



What is your video game New Year's resolution?

My New Year's resolution is to catch 'em all! **—MUG**

My video game New Year's resolution is to download The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past and finally beat that game. **—THE ZELDA DREAMER**

My video game resolution is to not get mad, kick the wall really hard, and break my toe anymore when I lose a boss battle in Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies. **—WILD WOODY**

I'll try to get back to all the games I didn't finish because other amazing games came out. For instance, I almost beat Kirby's Epic Yarn but didn't because I moved on to Epic Mickey. And I still need to beat Super Mario Galaxy 2. Sigh. Hopefully I will beat them before something else comes out and distracts me. Again. **—ICKYBOD CLAY**

My New Year's resolution is to buy and beat every single Zelda game. **—LORD WÜLF**

My New Year's resolution is to ride Yoshi...*for real.* First, I'll need green food coloring, the DNA of a horse and a frog, and then I'll need to sneak into an archeological dig and get the DNA of a T. rex and a stegosaurus.... Or I guess I could just enjoy a marathon of Yoshi games. **—FINALFANTOM**

My resolution? Plain and simple: I vow to get some guts and play first-person shooters like Conduit 2 without freaking out and screaming like a monkey when an enemy sneaks up behind me. It will be done this year! **—FISHERSPOT**

My New Year's resolution is to buy a Nintendo 3DS so that I can get Kingdom Hearts: Dream Drop Distance and/or the DS game Kingdom Hearts Re:coded. Also, to get past those dang sensors in Mega Man Zero collection. **—IMA HEARTLESS NOBODY**

My New Year's resolution is to convince my friends to play more Mario and Zelda than they play FPS games. It's a shame that players who feel games are more "hardcore" if they include guns, blood, and foul language are ignoring such creativity. **—JOSEPH H.**

My video game resolution this year is to buy and master all three games from the Mario and Luigi series. **—EMILY**

My New Year's resolution is to finally pay off all of my mortgage in Animal Crossing and stop putting thousands of bells in Tom Nook's pockets. **—CRAZY NATE**

My resolution is to finally complete the entire Ace Attorney series. I own each of the games but have never played them through all the way. This year I'm going to finish them and finally get the entire story. **—MIKE MCKNIGHT**

My video game New Year's resolution is to play through three entire video games in one day. It will be epic! **—DUFF MCWHALEN**

My video game New Year's resolution is to stop trying to use mind powers to control game characters when I can't find my remote. It's really starting to creep people out. **—QWERTY NEWS GUY**

My video game New Year's resolution is to convince Princess Peach to bring bodyguards when she leaves her castle. **—BRAD M.**

PLEASE WRITE US

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TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR LETTER PUBLISHED:

Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

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What Nintendo fans think, want, and do

The SCORE

WEIGH IN ON NEXT MONTH'S TOPICS AT WWW.NINTENDOPOWER.COM/POLLS.

DO YOU MISS THE DAYS WHEN ARCADES WERE POPULAR?

YEAH!

43%

NOT REALLY 30%

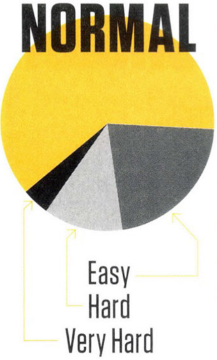
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO AN ARCADE! 27%

2 OUT OF 3

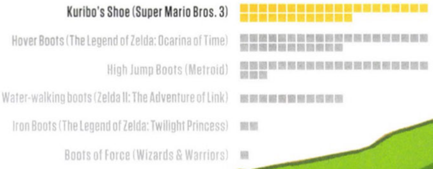
OF YOU LIKE DODONGO

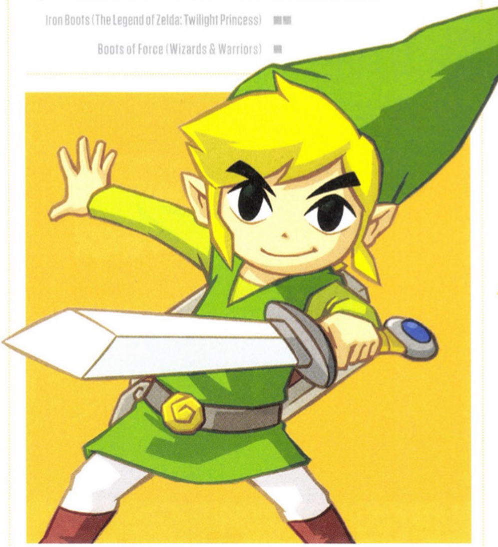
Which difficutlty do you normally play on?

NORMAL



WHICH FOOTWEAR WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO WEAR?





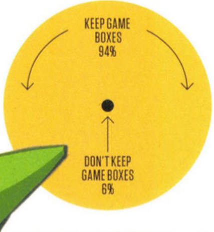
WHICH FACIAL FEATURE WOULD YOU PREFER TO HAVE?

LINK'S EARS

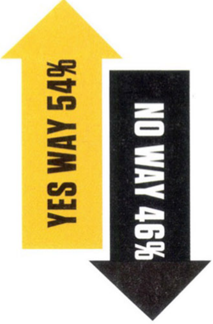
Link's ears 61%

Wario's mustache 29%

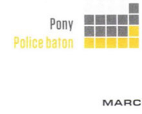
Luigi's nose 10%

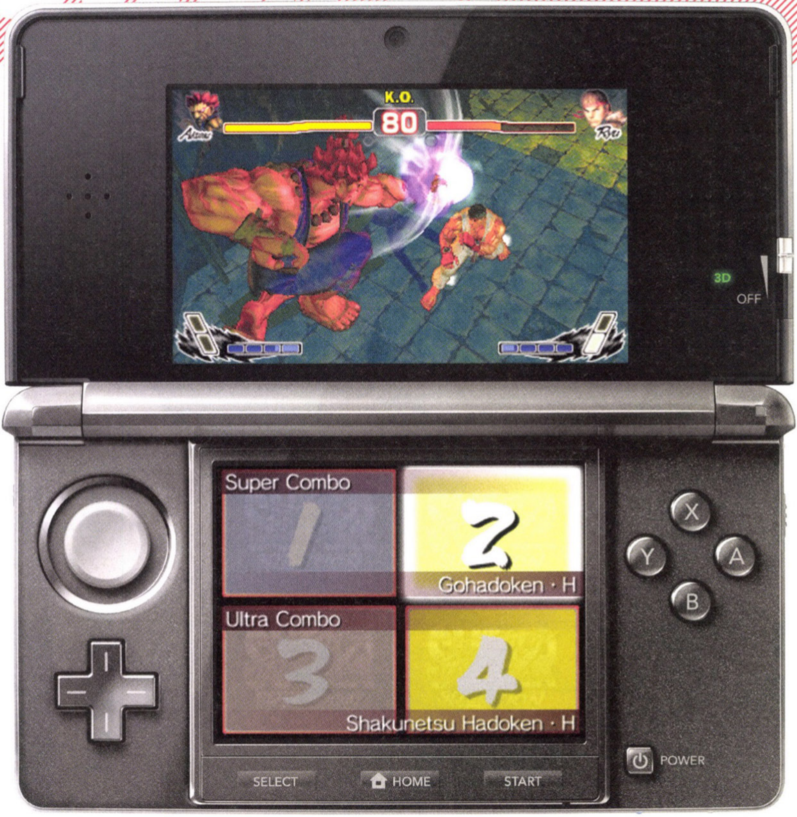


Would you ever want to play as a female lead character in The Legend of Zelda series?



WHAT IS THE NEXT PLASTIC GAMING PERIPHERAL YOU'D WANT TO SEE?





Welcome to the Next Dimension

Price, date, and other details are revealed for the astonishing Nintendo 3DS handheld.

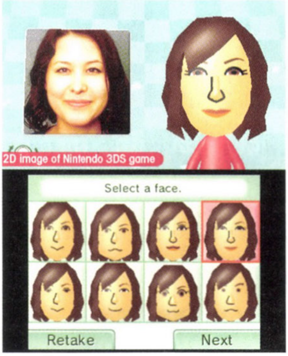
MARK MARCH 27 on your calendars, Nintendo fans—that's the date that the Nintendo 3DS system arrives in stores throughout North America to usher in the next generation of portable gaming. Available in either Cosmo Black or Aqua Blue at a suggested retail price of $249.99, the system is set to revolutionize the entertainment industry with 3D games, 3D photos, and more—all without the need for 3D glasses. "This is the opening of a vast new world in 3D entertainment.... Nothing comes between you and your gaming passion," proclaimed Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime at the Nintendo 3DS Media Summit held in January.

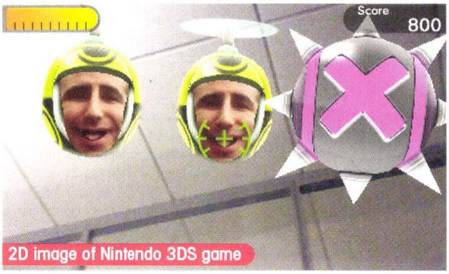
So far, the system is living up to the hype, offering a true sensation of depth that makes you feel as though you're looking deep into the screen. However, the experience is fully adjustable thanks to the 3D Depth Slider on the side of the unit's upper screen, which allows players to control the strength of the 3D effect. If you wish, you can even turn off the 3D effect entirely. (In fact, Nintendo suggests that users age 6 and under play with the system in 2D mode only, which can be ensured through the use of parental controls.)

Of course, the system is about much more than just 3D visuals. The hardware comes complete with an analog Circle Pad for improved game control, a traditional Control Pad and buttons, a lower screen with touch functionality, three built-in cameras, a microphone, a gyro sensor for motion-based control, and more. Read on to find out about the Nintendo 3DS system's intrinsic features, then flip to page 33 for massive in-depth coverage of the upcoming games. **—CHRIS H.**

SPITTING IMAGE

Mii characters aren't just for the Wii console anymore. Enhanced with new hairstyles and other features, the Mii Maker lets you create your own personal avatars. Not only can you make them from scratch or transfer them from your Wii, but you can use the Nintendo 3DS system's camera to autogenerate Mii characters. You can also save an image of your Mii to an SD memory card as if it were a digital photo.

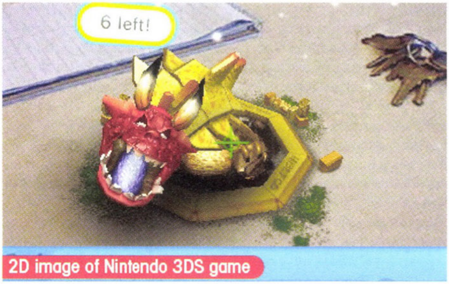

2D image of Nintendo 3DS game



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

BUILT-IN FUN

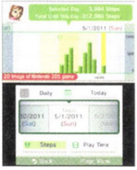
Preinstalled software lets you start having fun with the Nintendo 3DS from the minute you take it out of the box. One such title is Face Raiders, in which you use the system's camera to take a photo of your face. The photo is then mapped to flying enemy critters, and you must use the system's gyro sensor to prevent yourself from being besieged by your own disembodied noggin. The Nintendo 3DS also comes with six augmented-reality cards, which are used in conjunction with the system's cameras to create animated scenes based on the environment around you. In one preinstalled AR game, for example, targets (and even a dragon!) pop out of the surface in front of you, just begging to be blasted.



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

GET CONNECTED

The Nintendo 3DS allows you to communicate wirelessly like never before. The system's SpotPass feature lets you automatically connect to wireless hotspots (or through your home broadband Internet connection) to receive new content, while the StreetPass feature allows you to passively exchange data with other Nintendo 3DS owners, even when your system is in Sleep mode. Best of all, friend codes are now system-specific, not game-specific, which makes it much easier to play online with pals.

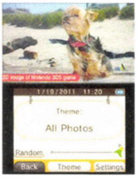


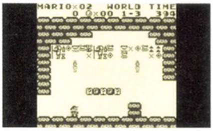
MONEY FOR NOTHIN'

They say you can't get something for nothing, but the Nintendo 3DS rewards you for just walking around. In Sleep mode, the system acts as a pedometer, which lets you earn Play Coins. The coins can then be traded in for unlockable goodies in certain games and applications.

WORTH MORE THAN 1,000 WORDS

It seems like every portable device these days lets you take photos, but the Nintendo 3DS is one of the few that lets you take photos in 3D. The two outward-facing cameras work together to create photos with real, adjustable depth. Of course, you can save the photos for later viewing.





SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

The Nintendo eShop (which will be available through a system update) will allow you you get your downloadable gaming fix. The shop will let you purchase DSiWare, titles exclusive to Nintendo 3DS, and Virtual Console games (featuring favorites from the Game Boy and Game Boy Color, including Super Mario Land and The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX). The shop will also let you view videos and information on current games, and you'll be able to search the shop using numerous parameters (such as favorite gaming franchises) to help you find the titles that are right for you.

Straight from the Top

Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime shares his thoughts on why Nintendo 3DS is a true game-changer.

When Nintendo announced its Nintendo 3DS launch plans in mid-January in New York City, Nintendo Power was on hand to take it all in. We also used the occasion to sit down with Nintendo of America's president and chief operating officer Reggie Fils-Aime to get his insight into why the system is the next big thing in video games and personal entertainment. —CHRIS H.

3DS
3DS
$249.99

Reggie Fils-Aime on stage at the recent Nintendo 3DS media summit in New York, where key launch details were announced.

NINTENDO POWER Why is the release of the Nintendo 3DS such an important event for Nintendo fans?

REGGIE FILS-AIME In our view, it's important for not just Nintendo fans, but fans of entertainment in general because it really changes the game on entertainment experiences on the go. 3D without glasses, the capability for 3D video playback, the ability for 3D photos, of course 3D games—it really is a brand-new experience that provides so much to the consumer. From a Nintendo perspective, what it also allows us to do is to continue driving on connected experiences. For us, we think that is an incredibly important area that we need to drive our own internal improvement in, and what we're offering with the Nintendo 3DS is a huge step forward for us.

Why is the social aspect of the system such a key component?

The social aspect is important because so much of the way brands are built today is through this personal endorsement, and we know that since today's marketing choices are 2D, and we're trying to market a 3D experience, that the ability for a consumer to show a friend, "Hey isn't this really cool? Look what I've just done; look at these 3D games; look at these 3D videos," we think that's incredibly important. StreetPass/SpotPass enhances the connective experiences. That's also important to us: the Nintendo eShop to provide digital content—both Virtual Console legacy content and new content. We believe that all of these will make the Nintendo 3DS the successor to the best-selling platform in US history.

Is that by far your biggest challenge with marketing the Nintendo 3DS—the fact that you can't convey 3D through most means?

Certainly showing the consumer what a 3D experience looks like in a 2D marketing world is a challenge. Another challenge is having the range of software titles in order to motivate consumers literally from [ages] 7 to 97. And certainly with third-party support that we've highlighted today we think we've taken a great step forward there. I would say that the other challenge we have is that the consumer has a limited amount of time and a limited amount of money, and the consumer needs to feel that their investment in time and in the price point really is worth it. We believe it is. Based on the reaction today, others believe it is, but that's also going to be a key challenge for us.

What are some lessons Nintendo has learned from past hardware launches, and how will they be applied to Nintendo 3DS?

Well, we've certainly learned the importance of launch library, and I do believe that the 3DS launch library is one of the best we've ever had—certainly in my tenure with the company. We've learned about the importance of experiential marketing—the consumer hands-on opportunity. That's going to be a big part of our launch. We've learned the importance of other partnerships. And while we didn't touch on it today, you can expect information about location-based partners, video-based partners, marketing partners, and that's certainly going to be a key leverage point for us moving forward.

What about spreading releases out more?

Certainly it's something we've tried to do, so I didn't put that in the bucket of the lessons learned. I think historically we've done that reasonably well. But it is important to have, as I said earlier, a range of content. For your readers, knowing that Kid Icarus: Uprising and Ocarina of Time are looming right after the launch window, certainly I think is pretty exciting to the passionate Nintendo fan.

Is there any concern that there isn't a Mario title in that mix?

Well, there isn't a concern on my part. I mean, anyone who has seen some of the video content that we've shared both at E3, at the September announcements coming out of Japan, out of the January 2011 events in Tokyo, everyone knows that we're working on a range of Mario titles. So, for us, it's about making sure they're perfect; it's about making sure we launch them at the appropriate time, and I think our fans know that's exactly what we'll do.

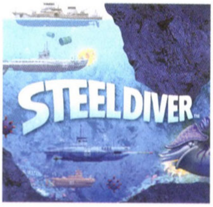
Why were third parties so eager to support Nintendo 3DS?

From a third-party developer's standpoint, they look for three things. First, they look for the potential of a huge install base. They've seen with the original DS as well as with Wii that we've been able to do that tremendously effectively. The second thing they look at are the built-in capabilities of the system. And that's been hugely exciting for developers. The graphics, the social aspects, the range of input devices, including the Circle Pad—all of that leads to ideas for developers in how they might leverage the system. Candidly, the third thing they look at is the sexiness of the device—can they emotionally get excited creating content for the device? And Nintendo 3DS has that in spades. So those three reasons plus, you know, candidly, our own push to get as many third-party developers on board really has set up what you've seen today—this plethora of hands-on experiences as well as a lot of additional titles well in development.

Do you think there is anything Nintendo is going to have to do to ensure that level of support from third parties continues?
Well, we're going to have to deliver on the promise of driving the big installed base, and we're going to have to deliver on the promise of continuing to drive innovation with applications. So certainly the job is not done on our part, but we're off to a fantastic start, and we believe that, in fact, third-party support will help us drive significant volume.

Of the games that are slated for the launch window, what is one title that players should be sure not to overlook?
Based on the way you framed the question, specifically, "don't overlook this," I'd have to say Steel Diver. Why do I point out that game? Well, Pilotwings Resort has the legacy of Pilotwings behind it, you know; Nintendogs + Cats has the legacy of Nintendogs; Steel Diver is a brand-new franchise. And I would say that, certainly in the development process, it's one that I've had a tremendous amount of fun with. The controls are flawless for the experience. So I do think that there's the potential that fans may say, "I've got an x amount of money; I'm going to buy the two I know and maybe not dive into Steel Diver," and I think that'd be a huge missed opportunity.

Do you have a personal favorite aspect of the Nintendo 3DS?
Favorite aspect.... Well, I love what the 3D cameras allow us to do. Meaning that it allows for the augmented reality—the AR games. It allows for the 3D photography. It allows us to do a lot of interesting things. I think there's a lot more that outside developers will be able to do once they get their hands on the SDK [software development kit] and continue to drive experimentation. So for me, I love what the two external cameras can do today and what they promise for the future.



According to Reggie, Nintendo's Steel Diver is a can't-miss game.

The first-party games that have been shown or talked about before, such as Star Fox 64 3D, Mario Kart, or Paper Mario—do you have any idea when we'll hear more about those?
So far, we've identified those first-party titles that will arrive during our "launch window," between the March 27th launch and E3 [which begins June 7th]. But please understand—this is just the tip of the iceberg. You'll be hearing details on a lot more in the near future.

Given that so many titles have already been announced, do you think there will be any Nintendo 3DS surprises at E3?
You know, we love to surprise people. That's one of the things I love as we prepare for E3—thinking about what can we do to really bring smiles onto peoples faces. And I have to tell you, the bar gets higher every year. So if I promise a surprise, the expectation will be even higher. So let's say there'll be no surprises and set low expectations, and we'll see how we can do our best to give just a little bit more.

Can you shed some light on the pricing for Nintendo 3DS games?
What we've said in the past is that Nintendo 3DS games will be in the range of current titles. Well, what does that mean? Today you could go to a local store and see prices for games everywhere from $35 to $45. And that's where you can broadly expect Nintendo 3DS games to be. As we finalize exactly what's available launch day and what will be available in the weeks following, we'll be much more specific on the pricing. But the Nintendo fans should take comfort that we understand value, and that the games will also be at a great value.

To turn back the clock a little bit—the response at E3 last year was fantastic. What was your take on the audience's reaction?
Last year's E3 was a lot of fun. The reason it was so much fun is that we were able to truly surprise the audience and everyone left our press conference really understanding the potential, not just of Nintendo 3DS but also the potential for Skyward Sword that we demoed at the event. For me, that's what was most fulfilling, unlike past E3s, where people had to wait a little bit to actually understand what our intentions were in the time gap between the event and when the first hands-on experiences could happen. The fact that it was immediate was a real positive for what we were trying to accomplish.

One of the things you've mentioned is 3D video. Has there been progress made on the distribution of 3D video content?
There's been tremendous progress; we're just not announcing those details today. We'll announce those details at a later date.

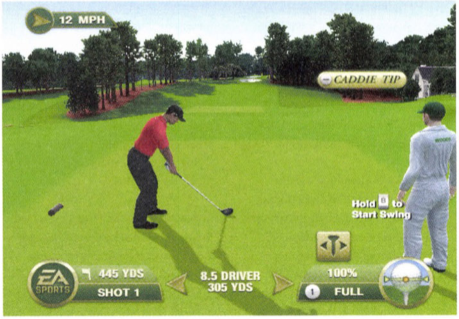
Another thing that you mentioned was, potentially, a Donkey Kong section of the Nintendo eShop. Does that mean we should expect something from Donkey Kong on the Nintendo 3DS in the near future? And along those lines, there was a picture of Pikmin in the 3D tech demo this morning. Anything on Pikmin that you would like to discuss?
We have no announcements to make for Nintendo games and franchises other than the specifics we have announced for the first three: Pilotwings Resort, Steel Diver, and Nintendogs + Cats. So you'll just have to smile along with me as we tease some of our other franchises, but we have nothing else to announce today.

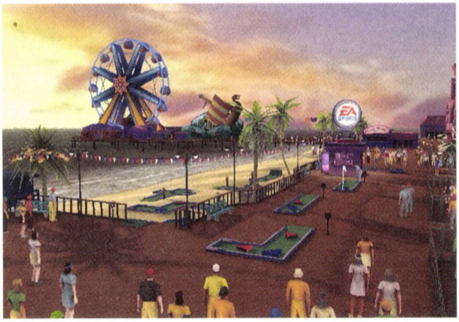
In an "Iwata Asks" interview, Mr. Iwata said that he would love to see 3D video recording come to Nintendo 3DS. How likely is that?
Well, Mr. Iwata's comments that he would love to see that capability really highlight that for us, this is a game-changer, and what we can do with 3D is really magical. What we've highlighted today are the system's capabilities during launch. But certainly, given the external cameras, given what we've already shared, it's not a huge step to understand how we might bring forward video capability.

For Nintendo fans that aren't able to upgrade to the Nintendo 3DS immediately, what will they be able to look forward to in the second quarter and beyond?
Certainly they'll be able to look forward to Pokémon Black and White. In terms of what we will have available in the April/May/June time period, we haven't made any announcements yet, but certainly there is going to continue to be a strong level of support for our DS business. And we do recognize, much like when we transitioned from Game Boy Advance to DS, that there continues to be a huge installed base to be able to market to 47 million units plus here in the US. So there'll be games, and we certainly will have good levels of support for the DS business.

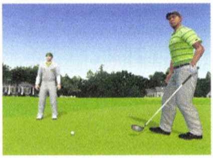
Wii as well. I mean, certainly a lot of people, me included, are looking forward to Skyward Sword.

Top third-party franchises are headed to Nintendo 3DS, such as Metal Gear Solid.



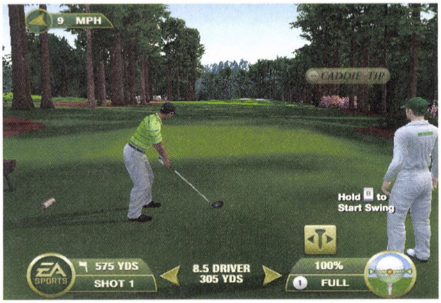


[Above] Mini golf returns with a brand new course.



Master Stroke

EA's award-winning golf sim heads to Augusta with **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12: The Masters.**



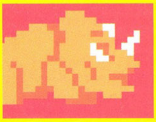
NO SPORTS FRANCHISE has been as consistently excellent on the Wii console as Tiger Woods PGA Tour. Given the impressive array of new features slated for this year's game, that streak doesn't appear to be in any danger. The headline, of course, is the inclusion of golf's most prestigious event—the Masters tournament. For the first time ever, gamers will be able to tee up at the famed Augusta National Golf Club, which has been painstakingly recreated through the use of aerial photos, first-hand developer visits, and even input from the club's head groundskeeper. Those wondering what the big deal is about a single course should know that Augusta is like the golf aficionado's nirvana.

The Masters permeates other facets of this year's game, too. A revamped career mode has you working your way from a hometown charity event to the PGA Tour, with the ultimate goal of donning the green jacket at Augusta. In addition, a new mode called Masters Moments lets you play through some of the most famous scenarios in the tournament's history. Finally, Tiger at the Masters replicates the exact conditions of Woods's four victories at the event and challenges you to beat his scores.

PGA Tour 12 retains the swing mechanics from last year's game, which offered an unparalleled sense of authenticity thanks to the Wii MotionPlus accessory. This year's edition adds support for the Wii Balance Board accessory and, for the first time in franchise history, an in-game caddie who will help you set up each shot. The Wii version also includes about 10 timed-exclusive courses that will be available only as downloadable content on the other consoles. It remains to be seen whether the real Tiger can make a triumphant comeback this season, but at least his video game has never looked better. **—STEVE T.**

A WINNER IS...

Fans of portable gaming. 2011 is going to be awesome.



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STAR POWER

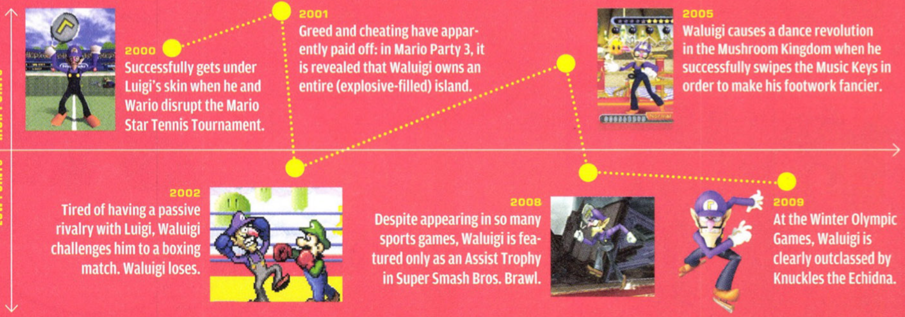
A closer look at the characters we love

FIRST APPEARANCE:
MARIO TENNIS
NINTENDO 64, 2000

Waluigi

This peculiar purple prankster is the troublemaking yin to Luigi's heroic yang, but we can't help but love the poor guy.

CAREER GRAPH



2000
Successfully gets under Luigi's skin when he and Wario disrupt the Mario Star Tennis Tournament.

2001
Greed and cheating have apparently paid off: in Mario Party 3, it is revealed that Waluigi owns an entire (explosive-filled) island.

2002
Tired of having a passive rivalry with Luigi, Waluigi challenges him to a boxing match. Waluigi loses.

2005
Waluigi causes a dance revolution in the Mushroom Kingdom when he successfully swipes the Music Keys in order to make his footwork fancier.

2008
Despite appearing in so many sports games, Waluigi is featured only as an Assist Trophy in Super Smash Bros. Brawl.

2009
At the Winter Olympic Games, Waluigi is clearly outclassed by Knuckles the Echidna.

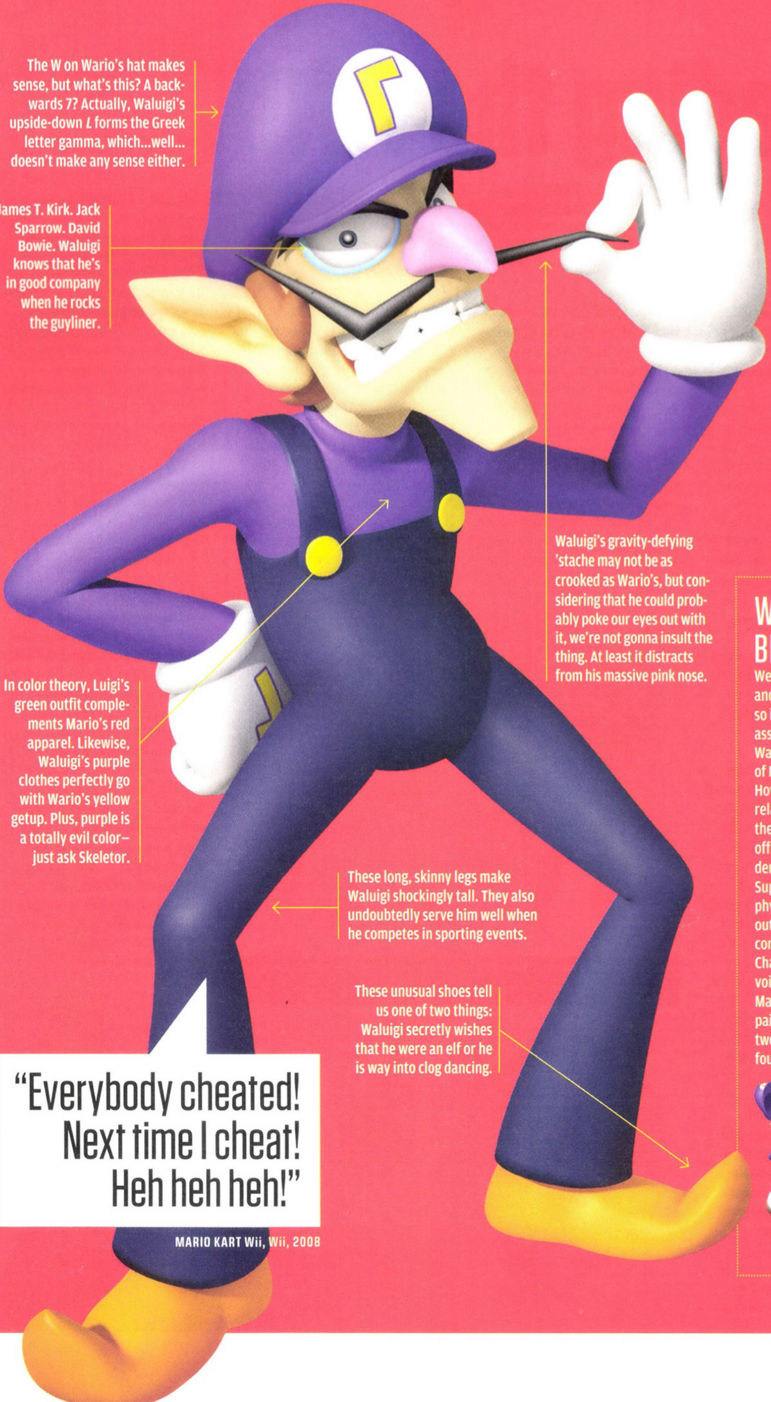
OUR FAVORITE WALUIGI GAMES

Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour
GAMECUBE, 2003
Waluigi hits the links to cause mischief while Mario and his friends enjoy a pleasant round of golf. Unfortunately, Waluigi's putting game is remarkably weak, causing his opponents to fall asleep while they wait for him to sink the ball.

Mario Power Tennis
GAMECUBE, 2004
After surviving Bowser's brutal training regimen, Waluigi invades the Mushroom Kingdom's tennis tournament. Even though his initial volley of Bob-ombs fails to stop Mario and Luigi, his dizzying Whirluigi technique makes him a formidable opponent.

Mario Kart DS
NINTENDO DS, 2005
To unlock Waluigi in this portable racer, you must earn all Gold Trophies on the 100cc Retro Grand Prix cups. In addition to his standard kart, Waluigi can drive his motorcycle—the Zipper—and an excavator-inspired kart dubbed Gold Mantis.

Mario Sports Mix
Wii, 2011
If you had asked us to guess which sport Waluigi would be good at, we'd have said basketball due to his tall, lanky frame. But he's also a good pick for hockey, volleyball, or dodgeball. (Just be sure to clear out of the locker room before he hits the showers.)



The W on Wario's hat makes sense, but what's this? A backwards 7? Actually, Waluigi's upside-down *L* forms the Greek letter gamma, which…well… doesn't make any sense either.

James T. Kirk. Jack Sparrow. David Bowie. Waluigi knows that he's in good company when he rocks the guyliner.

Waluigi's gravity-defying 'stache may not be as crooked as Wario's, but considering that he could probably poke our eyes out with it, we're not gonna insult the thing. At least it distracts from his massive pink nose.

In color theory, Luigi's green outfit complements Mario's red apparel. Likewise, Waluigi's purple clothes perfectly go with Wario's yellow getup. Plus, purple is a totally evil color–just ask Skeletor.

These long, skinny legs make Waluigi shockingly tall. They also undoubtedly serve him well when he competes in sporting events.

These unusual shoes tell us one of two things: Waluigi secretly wishes that he were an elf or he is way into clog dancing.

> "Everybody cheated! Next time I cheat! Heh heh heh!"

MARIO KART Wii, Wii, 2008

THE WA FACTOR

When Wario was introduced in Super Mario Land 2, everybody "got" his name. It was, of course, just Mario's name with the *M* inverted to form a *W*. But what's the deal with Waluigi's handle? It's actually a pun that combines the Japanese word for "bad" ("warui") with Luigi's name. Keep in mind that "r" and "l" make the same sounds in Japanese, and you end up with Waluigi or "bad Luigi."

WARIO BROTHERS?

We all know that Mario and Luigi are brothers, so it's only natural to assume that Luigi's rival, Waluigi, is the brother of Mario's rival, Wario. However, any fraternal relationship between the two has never been officially confirmed or denied. Even Waluigi's Super Smash Bros. trophy descriptions point out that the duo's true connection is a mystery. Charles Martinet, the voice of Waluigi (and Mario), once said of the pair, "I think they're just two nice, evil guys who found each other."

Breeding the Fifth

From photocopying a hand-drawn fanzine to conceiving one of the most successful entertainment franchises ever, few companies have experienced as meteoric a rise as Pokémon developer Game Freak. Pokémon art director and Game Freak cofounder Ken Sugimori joins director Junichi Masuda to answer our questions about Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version, the fifth pair of mainline Pokémon role-playing games.

NINTENDO POWER After years of progressively more exotic titles, is there any special significance to returning to basic colors with black and white?

JUNICHI MASUDA: We choose the titles to express the themes of each game. Like, diamonds are the hardest substance in the world, so that fit the theme of "ultimateness" in Pokémon Diamond and Pearl. This time we're pursuing a theme of "polarity," things that are defined by their opposition to each other. Take, for example, angels and demons, or light and shadow—if one didn't exist, the other would lose all meaning. "White" is a blank slate with potential to become anything, while "black" is complete and unchanging. So our intention actually wasn't to return to the basics, but to evoke that particular theme.

Can you give an example of how that theme manifests in the game?

JM: The Black Version exclusively features a metropolis called Black City, where the White Version has a very natural area called the White Forest. This contrast between cities and nature is one of the polar elements of the game. People who live in urban areas may long for open spaces and spend their vacations camping in nature, while people who live in rural areas may be more intrigued by the idea of visiting a big city. I don't think we could communicate that idea with just one game; it requires the contrast between the two.

Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version seem to include more new features than previous installments. How does the scale of the project compare to past generations of Pokémon?

JM: In terms of development resources, it was certainly the largest game we've ever made. We had a staff of 70 people working on it here at Game Freak, and then there's the Pokémon Global Link team on top of that, which featured dozens of additional developers. *[Pokémon Global Link is a new website that will launch this spring and allow players to link up their game data to experience additional online features. –Ed.]*

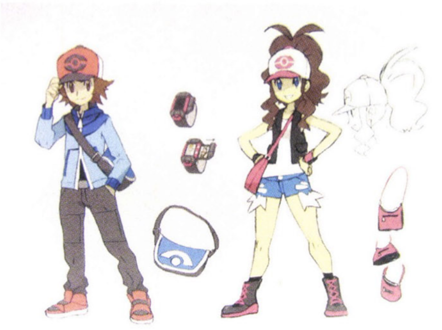
Can you walk us through the history of the game, and what inspired its new features?

JM: The project began about four years ago, but at that point it was just me doing the planning, and a team of around seven programmers who were researching what other sorts of things we could do with the Nintendo DS hardware. As for my role, I had the sense that there were a lot of people who think of Pokémon as being for children, and I wanted to find ways to broaden its appeal. I spent about a year thinking about how to design new aspects that would be perceived as cool and cutting-edge by adults.... I decided to make all of the Pokémon completely new, so that everyone would start on the same page, whether they were a longtime fan or completely new to the series. We also added infrared capabilities to make it extremely easy to connect with other players. As I mentioned, by the end of the project, the internal development team had to grown to around 70 people.

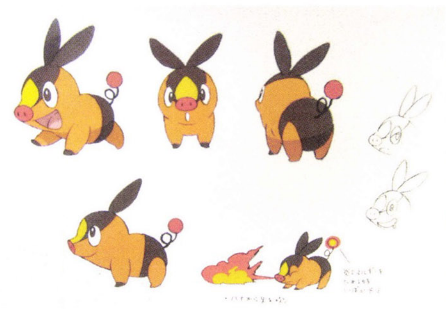
KEN SUGIMORI: This is the second generation of Pokémon games on the Nintendo DS hardware. So from the visual side, we were focusing on the issue of "how do we make a game feel fresh when it's on familiar hardware?" One of the ways was to use entirely new Pokémon, instead of mixing new and [existing] Pokémon the way we did in previous installments. Creating an entirely new ecosystem of Pokémon allowed us to return to square one in terms of design. So we already have Pokémon based on dogs, and horses, and deer, for example. But now that we've discarded our past work, in a sense, we can go back to the animals that have inspired Pokémon and study them with fresh eyes, and create new and different things.

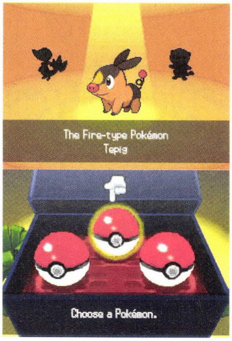
Do you feel you were successful in widening the games' appeal? Do you have a sense of what age groups they have resonated with?

JM: For Black and White in Japan, the majority of the players have been high-school and college students, but we expect the proportion of younger players to increase over the holidays. *[This interview took place just prior to the holidays. –Ed.]* Generally, the older players are more familiar with the series while the younger players are new to it. However, we believe most of the older players are "lapsed" Pokémon fans. Maybe they played Red and Blue Versions when they were younger, but have not necessarily been playing it consecutively since.



Early design sketches like these allow the Pokémon designers to work out the specific details of each Pokémon's appearance and animation.





The Fire-type Pokémon
Tepig

Choose a Pokémon.

Ken Sugimori does a quick sketch of new starter Pokémon Oshawott.

Does that represent a change from previous generations?
JM: Having so many older players return is a big change from previous generations.

Why do you think that is?
JM: From the very beginning of development, we tried to see the series through the eyes of older players who had "graduated" from the series. Does it seem too cute? Is the writing off-putting? Is it too childish? We wanted to change these things to make it more appealing to older players. For example, in Japan the text had been written without using kanji characters to make it easier for young children to read. So we added an option to have the game display kanji to make it more appealing to adults. We also wrote a story that we thought would be a little more interesting for an older audience.

As I mentioned earlier, we also added all sorts of cutting-edge communication features. Part of the reason for this was to make it easier for adults to communicate with other players. Younger kids are playing together all the time, but older players are a little shyer about such things. So we added infrared technology that makes it easier and more intuitive to link up with other players, and added the Internet functionality so that players don't even need to see each other in order to trade [or battle] Pokémon.

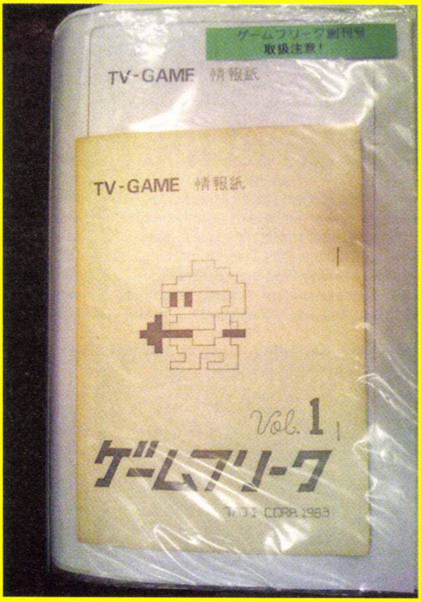
The look of the Pokémon themselves also seems to have evolved quite a bit since the early games of the series. What inspired those changes?
KS: Mr. Masuda asked us to play up the "coolness" of the Pokémon in Black and White. So we're using a lot more sharp and angular lines, rather than rounded ones. But a lot of it is just that we have different character designers working on the different generations of games. I think the group that worked on Black and White gravitated more toward "cool" designs.
JM: Advances in the hardware have also impacted the style of Pokémon over the years. Higher-resolution platforms have allowed for more detailed designs.

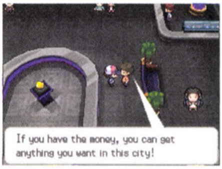
What is the process for designing new Pokémon? How do you decide which ones make the cut?

The Birth of Game Freak

"In the early 80's, there wasn't any game-themed media at all, and certainly no Internet," recalls Sugimori. So a high-school classmate named Satoshi Tajiri decided to create his own arcade-game strategy fanzine, which he appropriately titled Game Freak. Hand-written, photocopied, and stapled together, the publication was nonetheless a hit with a passionate audience of arcade-game fanatics. After stumbling upon the first issue (which covered the then-hot arcade title Dig Dug), Sugimori began contributing to the publication, and he and Tajiri became fast friends. "While playing games [for the magazine], we got to talking about what we thought they were missing, and how we would have made them differently, and we saw eye to eye on a lot of things," explains Sugimori. "From there, it was an easy leap to 'Why don't we just start making games ourselves?'"

In 1989, Tajiri and Sugimori completed their first game, Mendel Palace for the NES, and built a reputation for great side-scrolling action games like Smart Ball for the Super NES and Pulseman for the Genesis. In 1996, Game Freak finally hit the big time with Pokémon, a passion project based on Tajiri's childhood memories of bug-collection that he and Sugimori had been quietly working on for years. But even then, Game Freak didn't forget their roots: the company published a few last fanzine-style issues of their eponymous magazine—with their own games on the covers.





If you have the money, you can get anything you want in this city!

Axew Lv.50
Minccino Lv.50
Oshawott Lv.50
Munna Lv.50
Tepig Lv.50
Snivy Lv.50

What will Snivy do?

Snivy Lv.50
Reshiram Lv.50
170/170

What will Reshiram do?

Fresh air!
A comfortable breeze.

KS: We probably design around three times more Pokémon than we intend to actually use in the game. The way it works is, each designer brings in rough sketches of their designs. I meet with them individually to discuss certain features of their designs, and they bring them back with the revisions. If the Pokémon makes the cut, I will draw its official art.

In terms of how we decide which ones make the cut...hmmm. Well, in the games, Pokémon serve two roles. They fight for you, but they're also your companions. So a Pokémon needs to seem ferocious enough to be potent in combat, while also looking endearing enough that you'd want it as a friend. It can't be too ferocious. It's difficult to strike that balance, so that's probably the biggest criteria we're looking for. Another is simply suiting the needs of the game: we know we'll need a certain amount of Water-type Pokémon, and a certain amount of Flying-type Pokémon, and so on. If the designers submit too many birds, then some of them have to be cut, even if they're great designs.

With the ever-growing size of the Pokémon roster, it must have required an incredible amount of work to animate and rebalance over 600 Pokémon.

JM: It certainly did! We have a whole team that just worked on game balance and updating the parameters of all the Pokémon. But in the end, we can never compete with the effort the players put into coming up with new combat strategies. We're always surprised at which Pokémon end up being used in high-level play, such as the Pokémon World Championships.

And you don't ever think, "let's make our lives easier by cutting the least popular Pokémon out of the franchise"?

JM: [Laughs] I think one of the joys of Pokémon is being able to use your favorite Pokémon from the Blue and Red Versions all the way through to the newest iterations. So no, I don't think we can do that.

After setting the previous games in a Japan-flavored world, why did you decide on a more Western setting for Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version?

JM: In Black and White, we decided to use New York City's Manhattan as a motif. I visited New York for the launch of Pokémon Diamond and Pearl, and spent a lot of time wandering around. I was impressed with how many different nationalities of people lived there, and the individual communities with their special events and street festivals. It had such an international feel...like a world without borders. It seemed like it would be an ideal setting for a video game, and that inspired me to give it a try.

What inspired the addition of seasons?

JM: In Pokémon Black and White, the season changes every month. We wanted to introduce an element that would bring some more gradual change to the game. Like, if you look at a plant every day, you don't notice anything changing. But if you look at it after a month, you'll clearly notice that it's grown, or dried out, or its flowers are blooming, or whatever. We wanted players to experience something like that. So if a player puts down the game in December, maybe they'll be curious about what might have changed, and be motivated to pick it up again in January. The seasons allow us to provide interesting new discoveries for the player over a period of months. For example, the coloring of the Pokémon Deerling changes every season.

In the months since the Japanese release of Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version, what aspect of the fan reaction have you found most surprising?

JM: The biggest surprise was definitely the level of interest in Pokémon Global Link. [Laughs] There isn't as much Wi-Fi access in Japan as there is in America, so we never imagined that it would prove so popular [in Japan]. We had over a million people register—nearly one in four people who bought the game—and it overwhelmed our servers. We had to significantly increase their capacity almost immediately.

One last question: before the Pokémon series, Game Freak was famous for making great side-scrolling action games. Do you plan to return to that genre one day?

JM: Yes. [Smiles]

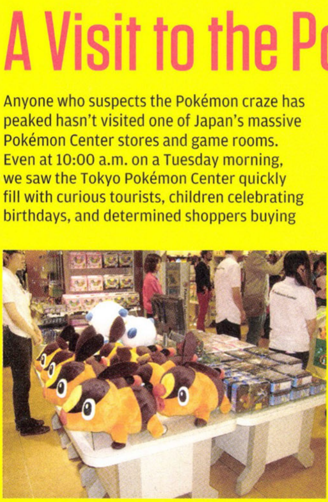
KS: We felt that way before, so we made Drill Dozer.

I'm surprised you haven't done a side-scrolling Pokémon game yet.

KS: If we hear from our fans that they would want one, we would love to do it.

A Visit to the Pokémon Center

Anyone who suspects the Pokémon craze has peaked hasn't visited one of Japan's massive Pokémon Center stores and game rooms. Even at 10:00 a.m. on a Tuesday morning, we saw the Tokyo Pokémon Center quickly fill with curious tourists, children celebrating birthdays, and determined shoppers buying Pokémon plush toys by the basket-load. The amount of Pokémon-related merchandise for sale is staggering, and much of it is exclusive to the six-store retail chain. There's even a game room in back for Pokémon battles, and video tutorials (starring local TV celebrities) on how to play the card game.



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POWER QUIZ

EASY

What is the name of the Virtual Boy game that starred Nintendo Power's former mascot, Nester?

AVERAGE

How many games were released for the Virtual Boy in the US?

HARDCORE

What Japan-only Virtual Boy game was an update to a '70s arcade classic?

First Catch

Act fast to add Victini to your team in **Pokémon Black Version** or **Pokémon White Version**!

Download the Liberty Pass and go after Victini!

FROM THE INSTANT Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version go on sale, you can use either game to download an item called the Liberty Pass via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, which allows you to take a tour boat from Castelia City to Liberty Garden to battle and catch the Mythical Pokémon Victini. This Pokémon—which cannot be caught through normal gameplay—is the first to be both Psychic- and Fire-type, and has an exclusive new Victory Star Ability that raises the accuracy of all your Pokémon's moves in battle. The Liberty Pass will only be available through April 10; don't miss your chance! —**CHRIS S.**

An All-Star Lineup

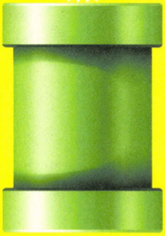
Surprising inclusions highlight the full character roster for THQ's **WWE All Stars** for Wii.

WHEN WE SPOKE to creative director Sal DiVita for last issue's WWE All Stars feature article, he stated, "I personally think we have an amazing lineup for WWE All Stars, and I know a few of the talent we managed to acquire on our roster will be pleasantly and shockingly surprising to our players." Now that THQ has unveiled almost the entire character lineup, there's no doubt that fans around the world would agree. Highlighting the roster are two legendary '80s performers that no wrestling fan would have likely predicted: Hulk Hogan (who currently works for WWE's competition, TNA) and "Macho Man" Randy Savage (who had a notorious falling out with WWE and hasn't appeared in a WWE game for more than 15 years). Included in the legends portion of the lineup is a who's-who of pro-wrestling history, including the Ultimate Warrior, Bret "The Hitman" Hart, Sgt. Slaughter, Jake "The Snake" Roberts, "Rowdy" Roddy Piper, "Superfly" Jimmy Snuka, Eddie Guerrero, Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat, Andre the Giant, and The Rock. Complementing the classic superstars are modern-day grapplers such as Randy Orton, Triple H, Sheamus, Rey Mysterio, Big Show, Edge, John Morrison, Kane, Kofi Kingston, Jack Swagger, and John Cena. The game will be available on the Wii console near the end of March. —**CHRIS H.**

WARP ZONE

What we were writing about way back when

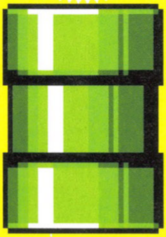
5 YEARS AGO



SPECIAL REPORT: METROID PRIME HUNTERS
NINTENDO POWER
GONZO GAMING!
EXTREME ANIMAL CROSSING MAKEOVERS
SONIC RIDERS DRIVERS WANTED
VOTE!

Crazy games with crazy ideas were popping out all over the place in March 2006, and Nintendo Power chose to celebrate the occasion with features on out-there titles such as Chibi-Robo (the household-robot-helper game), Odama (the pinball-meets-strategy game), and Drill Dozer (a brilliant platformer from the developers of Pokémon). The games were so crazy, NP even opted for an experimental text-heavy cover. Did it work? You be the judge.

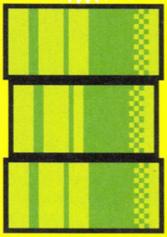
10 YEARS AGO



PREVIEW THE NEW ZELDA GAMES!
NINTENDO POWER
Pokémon Stadium 2

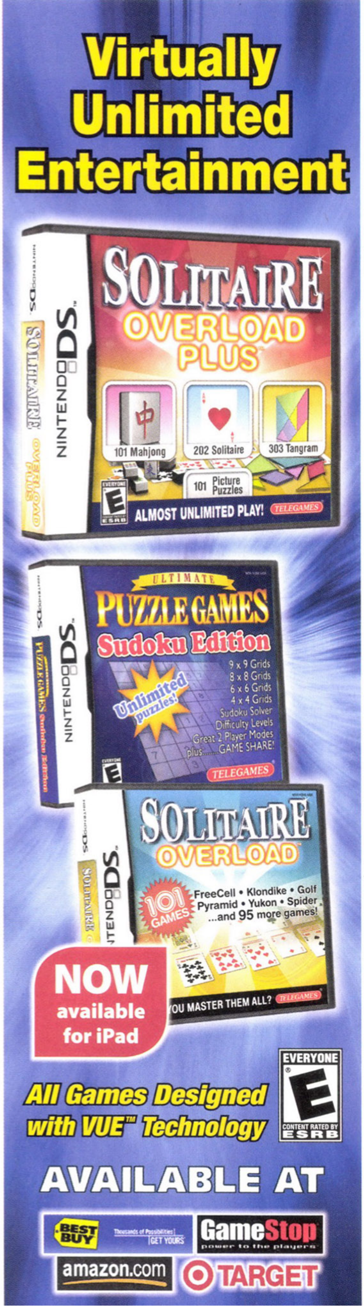
The arrival of a new Pokémon game is always a big deal, and that was certainly the case in March 2001, when Pokémon Stadium 2 hit the Nintendo 64 system. Accompanying the game's release was a 12-page Nintendo Power cover story featuring loads of detailed battle tactics and stats. The issue also contained a strategy feature on Paper Mario and early previews of The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons and The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages.

20 YEARS AGO



THE INSIDE STORY OF NES
THE NES CONTROL DECK
THE COMPUTER BRAIN

Remember Metal Storm? It's OK if you don't—although this mech-based action game was on the cover of the March 1991 issue of Nintendo Power, it didn't set the gaming world on fire. Other big features in this issue included a detailed look at G.I. Joe for the NES and an inside peek at the NES itself; the NP crew actually opened up the machine to examine what makes it tick. Also, Super Mario Bros. 3, Mega Man 3, and Castlevania III were among the top nominees for the 1990 Nintendo Power awards.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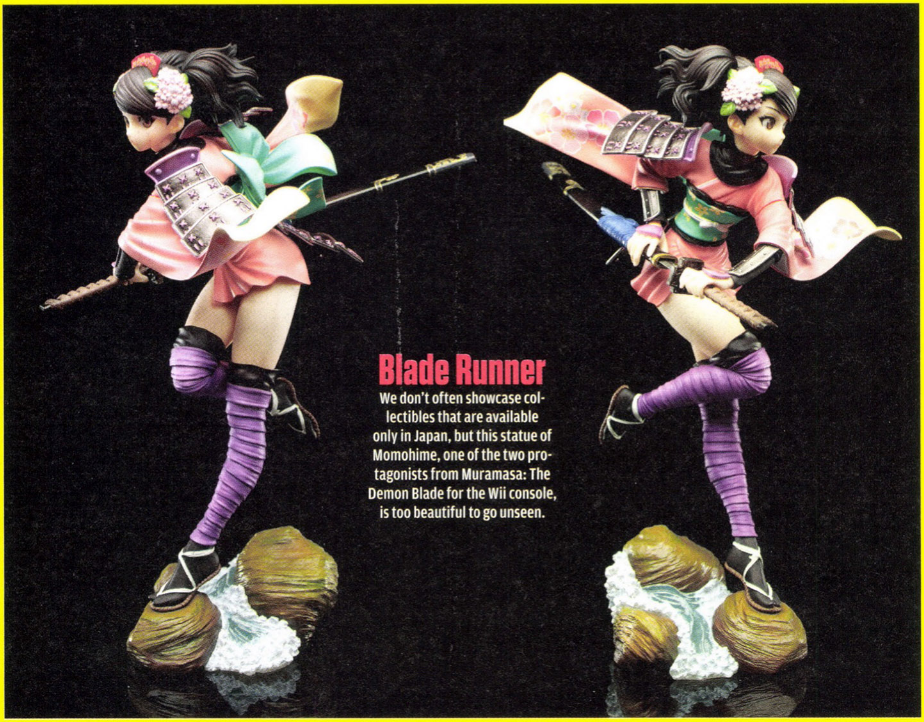
COLLECTOR'S CORNER

SERIOUSLY COOL STUFF FOR SERIOUS NINTENDO FANS

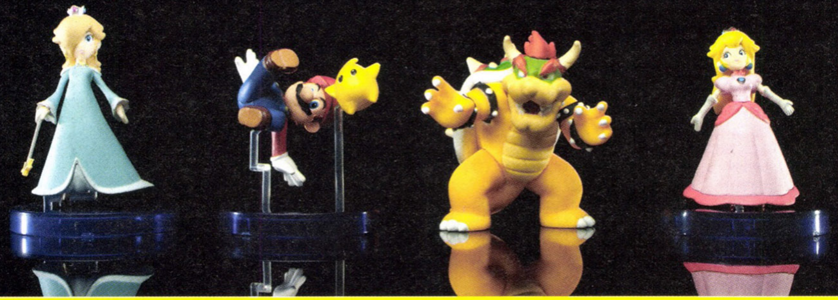


Blade Runner

We don't often showcase collectibles that are available only in Japan, but this statue of Momohime, one of the two protagonists from Muramasa: The Demon Blade for the Wii console, is too beautiful to go unseen.

Cosmic Capsules

These small Super Mario Galaxy desktop figures come packaged in plastic capsules so you can't tell if you're getting Rosalina, Mario, Bowser, Peach, or a pair of spotted generic enemies (not shown).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK MADEO

GAME FORECAST

Wii

AAA Lucha Libre: Heroes del Ring	Konami	3/11
Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
Cartoon Network*	Crave	HOL 11
Conduit 2	Sega	4/11
Driver San Francisco	Ubisoft	2011
Enclave: Shadows of Twilight	TopWare	TBA
Fit in Six	Ubisoft	3/11
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	Warner Bros.	Q3 11
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Hard Grip: The Climbing Game	TBA	TBA
Jimmie Johnson's Anything with an Engine	Autumn	2011
The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword	Nintendo	2011
LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game	Disney	5/11
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	3/11
Major League Baseball 2K11	2K Sports	3/11
Man vs. Wild	Crave	3/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rango The Video Game	Paramount Digital	3/11
Rio	THQ	4/11
Rock of the Dead	Conspiracy	2011
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	TBA
The Smurfs	Ubisoft	8/11
SpongeBob SquarePants*	THQ	TBA
Stratusphere	TBA	TBA
Thor: God of Thunder	Sega	5/11
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12: The Masters	Electronic Arts	3/11
Top Spin 4	2K Sports	3/11
Virtua Tennis 4	Sega	SPR 11
WWE All Stars	THQ	3/11

NINTENDO DS

Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove	Natsume	2011
Ghostwire: Link to the Paranormal	TBA	TBA
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	Warner Bros.	Q3 11
LEGO Battles: Ninjago	Warner Bros.	SPR 11
LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game	Disney	5/11
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	3/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Rango The Video Game	Paramount Digital	3/11
Rio	THQ	4/11
The Smurfs	Ubisoft	8/11
Thor: God of Thunder	Sega	5/11

NINTENDO 3DS

Animal Crossing*	Nintendo	TBA
Asphalt 3D	Ubisoft	SPR 11
Assassin's Creed: Lost Legacy	Ubisoft	TBA
Baseball*	Konami	TBA
Batman*	Warner Bros.	TBA
BloodRayne: The Shroud	Majesco	TBA
Bokujyoumonogatari 3D*	Marvelous	TBA
Bomberman*	Hudson	FALL 11
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	TBA
Bust-A-Move Universe	Square Enix	Q2 11
Carnival Games*	Take-Two	TBA
Cartoon Network*	Crave	TBA
Cave Story 3D	NIS America	SUM 11
Chocobo Racing 3D*	Square Enix	TBA
Combat of Giants: Dinosaurs 3D	Ubisoft	3/11
Contra*	Konami	TBA
Crash-City GP	Rocket	TBA
Crush 3D	Sega	TBA
cubic ninja	AQ	TBA
de Blob 2	THQ	TBA
Dead or Alive Dimensions	Tecmo Koei	3/11
Deca Sports Extreme	Hudson	SUM 11
DJ Hero 3D	Activision	TBA
Dr. Laurtec and the Forgotten Knights	Konami	TBA
Dragon Ball*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	TBA
Dream Trigger 3D	D3Publisher	SPR 11
Driver Renegade	Ubisoft	Q2 11
Dual Pen Sports	Namco Bandai	2011
Dynasty Warriors*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Etrian Odyssey*	Atlus	TBA
Face Kart: Photo Finish	Majesco	2011
FIFA Soccer*	Electronic Arts	TBA
Final Fantasy*	Square Enix	TBA
Frogger*	Konami	TBA
Gundam*	Namco Bandai	TBA
James Noir's Hollywood Crimes	Ubisoft	SPR 11
Kid Icarus: Uprising	Nintendo	2011
Kingdom Hearts: Dream Drop Distance	Square Enix	TBA
Kororinpa*	Hudson	TBA
Kung Fu Panda: Kaboom of Doom	THQ	TBA
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D	Nintendo	2011
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	3/11
Lion's Pride: Adventures in the Serengeti	Majesco	TBA
Lovely Lisa 3D	Tomy	TBA
Madden NFL Football	Electronic Arts	TBA
Mario Kart*	Nintendo	TBA
Martha Stewart	Majesco	TBA
Marvel Super Hero Squad: The Infinity Gauntlet	THQ	TBA
Mega Man Legends 3	Capcom	TBA
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	Konami	TBA
My Garden	Electronic Arts	TBA
Naruto Shippuden Action*	Tomy	TBA
Nikoli's Pencil Puzzle*	Hudson	FALL 11
Ninja Gaiden*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
nintendogs + cats	Nintendo	SPR 11
Pac-Man & Galaga*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Paper Mario*	Nintendo	TBA
The Penguins of Madagascar	THQ	TBA
Pet Zombies in 3D	Majesco	2011
Pilotwings Resort	Nintendo	SPR 11
Pro Evolution Soccer 2011 3D	Konami	2011
Professor Layton and the Mask of Miracle*	Level-5	TBA
Puss N Boots	THQ	TBA
Rabbids Travel in Time	Ubisoft	3/11
Rayman 3D	Ubisoft	SPR 11
Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D	Capcom	SUM 11
Resident Evil Revelations	Capcom	TBA
Ridge Racer 3D	Namco Bandai	SPR 11
Saints Row: Drive-By	THQ	TBA
Samurai Warriors Chronicles	Tecmo Koei	3/11
Shin Megami Tensei*	Atlus	TBA
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor Overclocked	Atlus	2011
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona*	Atlus	TBA
The Sims 3	Electronic Arts	4/11
Sonic*	Sega	TBA
SpongeBob SquigglePants	THQ	SPR 11
Star Fox 64 3D	Nintendo	2011
Steel Diver	Nintendo	SPR 11
Super Monkey Ball 3D	Sega	3/11
Super Robot*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition	Capcom	SPR 11
Thor: God of Thunder	Sega	5/11
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Shadow Wars	Ubisoft	3/11
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3D	Ubisoft	SPR 11
VS-robo	Rocket	TBA
WonderWorld Amusement Park	Majesco	TBA

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. * TENTATIVE TITLE **NOTE:** RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.

READERS' MOST WANTED

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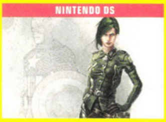
Wii

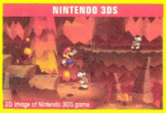
1. The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword
2. LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean
3. LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars
4. Cartoon Network*
5. Thor: God of Thunder

NINTENDO DS



1. Captain America: Super Soldier
2. Disciples II
3. Doodle Hex
4. Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove
5. Ghostwire: Link to the Paranormal

NINTENDO 3DS



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

1. Paper Mario*
2. Mario Kart*
3. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D
4. Kid Icarus: Uprising
5. Star Fox 64 3D

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IN THIS SECTION

DSiWARE PREVIEW
Ikachan

WIIWARE REVIEWS
AROUND THE WORLD
CHICK CHICK BOOM
DOC CLOCK: THE TOASTED SANDWICH OF TIME
GHOST MANIA
INKUB
JAM CITY ROLLERGIRLS
JELLYCAR 2
SNEEZIES
SOCCER BASHI
URBANIX

VIRTUAL CONSOLE REVIEWS
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BLACK TIGER
EXED EXES
FIGHTER'S HISTORY DYNAMITE
GHOSTS'N GOBLINS
MAGICAL DROP III
MARIO PARTY 2

DSiWARE REVIEWS
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ALIEN PUZZLE ADVENTURE
ALT-PLAY: JASON ROHRER ANTHOLOGY
ANIMAL BOXING
ANTE UP: TEXAS HOLD'EM
COSMO FIGHTERS
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ROCKS N' ROCKETS
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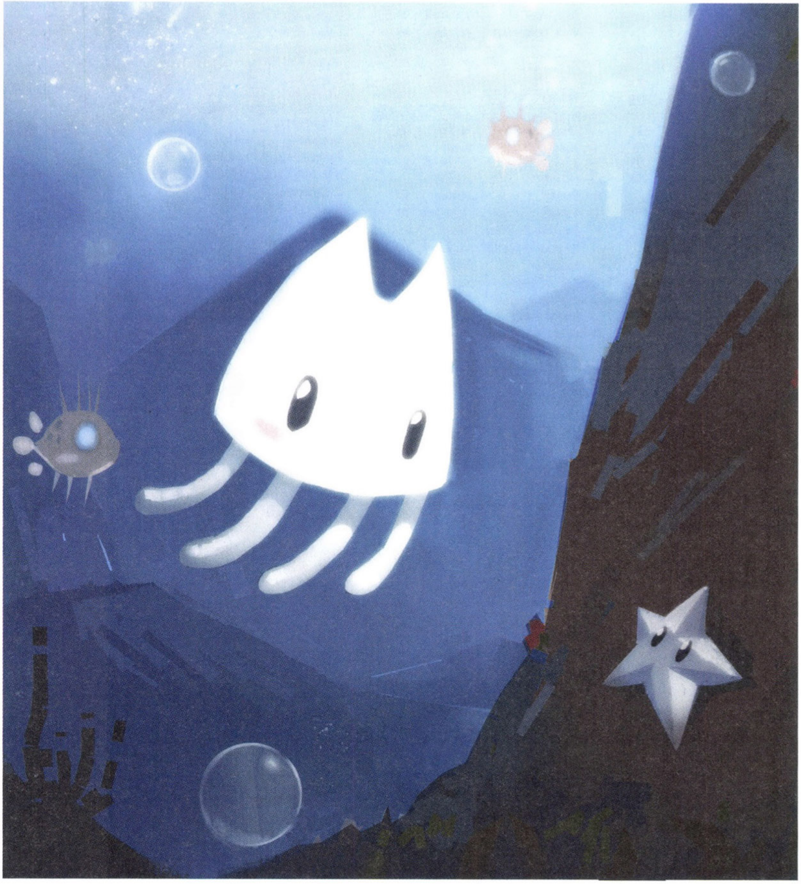
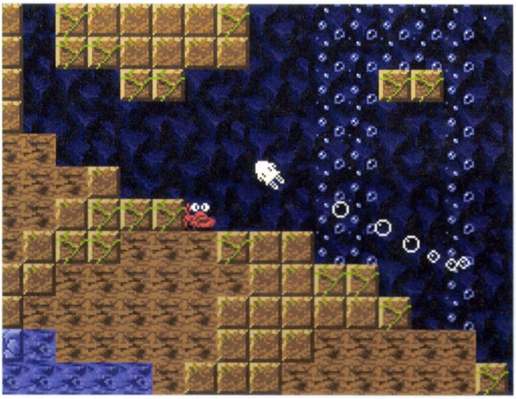
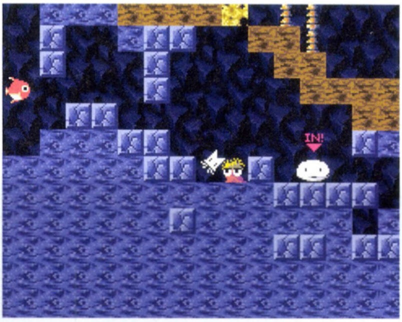
WORD SEARCHER II



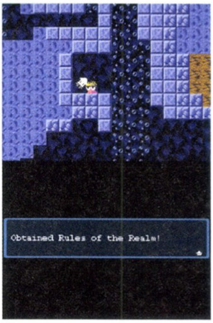
It's Squidiculous!

The action's better down where it's wetter in Ikachan, the next DSiWare game from the makers of Cave Story.





[Below] The bottom screen is used to display text and your inventory.


Obtained Rules of the Realm!

EVERYONE KNOWS OF the high-seas tales of vicious squid. They sink ships. They crush submarines. They eat sailors. Johnny, the squiddy hero of Ikachan, is nothing like that. Cute and diminutive, Johnny is embarking on a retro-inspired 2D tale of exploration, mystery, and adventure in the latest DSiWare game from Cave Story creator Daisuke "Pixel" Ayama.

Not unlike Cave Story, Ikachan begins with a main character who wakes up in a cave (albeit an underwater one) without knowing exactly who he is or how he got there. The good news is that you'll get a grip on the situation pretty fast by talking to the other undersea creatures. The bad news is that trouble's afoot—an abundance of earthquakes, combined with a food shortage, is wreaking havoc under the sea. Naturally, it's up to Johnny to set out on a quest to solve these problems and figure out exactly what's causing the chaos.

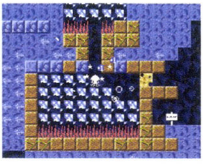
Given Johnny's squidlike nature, it's no surprise that he isn't a typical game hero. He doesn't wield swords or armor, and he definitely won't be equipping any high-jump boots. On the other hand, he *can* swim freely through the ocean. By pressing any of the Nintendo DSi system's face buttons you'll make Johnny thrust through the water, and you can adjust his direction via the Control Pad. Though the game doesn't boast hyperrealistic water physics or the like, it provides a fine sensation of aquatic movement—just be careful not to swim into any hazardous spikes. Additionally, Johnny does have some offensive capabilities: very early in the game you'll acquire a pointed hat, which lets you defeat enemies (such as fish, crabs, urchins, and starfish) by ramming them from below.

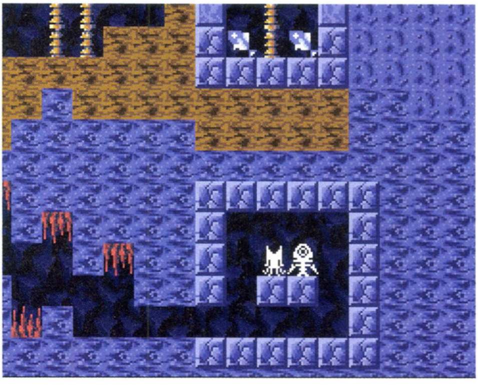
As the adventure progresses you'll acquire an assortment of other items, some of which enhance your abilities (the condenser, for example, lets you perform horizontal dashes for fighting foes and smashing through blocks) and others that are used for trading with nonplayable characters. You'll also want to collect every fish you can find—not only do they replenish your health, but they provide you with experience points (which allow you to level up, of course). As you find items and increase in strength, you'll be able to get past obstacles and explore more of the game world. Eventually you may even have to face a boss or two.

But while Ikachan has all the features you'd expect in an action-adventure game, don't think you'll have to devote massive amounts of time to see how it all unfolds. Instead of numerous separate areas, the game features just a single huge map, and most players should be able to get through it in just a couple of hours. According to representatives of publisher Nicalis, one of the reasons Ikachan is ideal for DSiWare is that it's a bite-sized game that will have a bite-sized price to match.

Considering Ikachan's humble origins (it was originally a PC project that Pixel designed to practice his programming skills when Cave Story was early in development), the game has come a long way. Its unique story and aquatic gameplay promise to deliver a fulfilling adventure, and if it's even half as satisfying as Cave Story, players will be in for a treat. Look for it in the Nintendo DSi Shop in the near future. **—CHRIS H.**

[Below] Fish are delicious—and they provide experience points.





EVALUATION STATION

WiiWARE

Tehran
Jerusalem
Riyadh

AROUND THE WORLD

PUBLISHER: **WIZARBOX**
GENRE: **PARTY**
Wii POINTS: **500**

More study aid than game, Around the World asks you to identify points of interest on a globe. Up to four players choose which categories are in play—big cities, geography, wonders, and capitals of the US—then battle for points based on the accuracy of their pin placements. While there's potential for learning, the game seems bizarrely disinterested in that goal; for example, it'll show you where a big city is (after you've guessed), but not the name of the country it's in! —PATRICK C.

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE

CHICK CHICK BOOM

PUBLISHER: **TONS OF BITS**
GENRE: **ACTION**
Wii POINTS: **800**

At first the deceptively adorable Chick Chick Boom seems overly simplistic, but after a quick run through its tutorial, you discover the depth contained within its combat system. Lobbing attacks at your opponent while defending your own turf requires careful resource management and precise timing. The battles tend to be hectic, but are always enjoyable. It's even better in multiplayer mode, either as a one-on-one fight or with two teams of two players duking it out. —PHIL T.

Recommended

WiiWARE

DOC CLOCK: THE TOASTED SANDWICH OF TIME

PUBLISHER: **STICKMEN STUDIOS** GENRE: **ADVENTURE** Wii POINTS: **1,000**

In Doc Clock, poor design choices hamper a solid concept—progressing through levels by solving a variety of physics-based puzzles. The doc plods along at a snail's pace, and his oft-used mechanical arm is frequently unresponsive. This makes precise placement of items extremely frustrating. Complicating matters further is the fact that everything feels way too floaty, which leads to numerous flubbed solutions. In fact, the game's time-travel mechanic (which allows you to turn back the clock) seems less like an integrated play mechanic than like a way to cover up the shoddy physics. The constant dialogue, which really wishes it were funny, just adds to the pain. —PHIL T.

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE

GHOST MANIA

PUBLISHER: **LEGENDO ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Offering a sharp-dressed take on falling-block puzzles, Ghost Mania has players forming masses of colored blocks that disappear when like-colored ghost squares are dropped into them. Naturally, failure is measured by the height of your stack. While the puzzle action is rewarding and multiple single- and two-player modes keep things varied, your success hinges on the game giving you ghost squares when you need them, which can lead to frustration. —PHIL T.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE

INKUB

PUBLISHER: **COSMONAUT GAMES**
GENRE: **STRATEGY**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Though it's hard to tell at first glance, Inkub is essentially a tower-defense game. But it's one with a literal twist; you must rotate the playfield so you can defend multiple sides of your incubator from enemy attack. Between the multitasking gameplay, unique weapons, and high challenge level, the game is well worth checking out for tower-defense enthusiasts. Such details, however, probably won't mean much to anyone who's not a hardcore fan of this overcrowded subgenre. —CHRIS H.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE

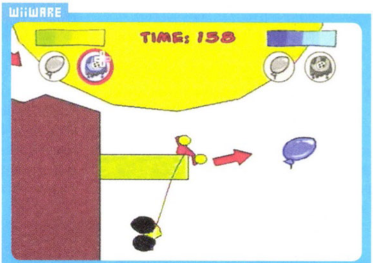
JAM CITY ROLLERGIRLS

PUBLISHER: **FROZEN CODEBASE**
GENRE: **RACING**
Wii POINTS: **1,000**

The first-ever video game for women's flat-track roller derby, Jam City Rollergirls combines the sport with elements of kart-racing games. It's genuinely well presented in terms of physics, graphics, and authenticity, but the rules are odd and the action gets repetitive. Looping through the same five short (20-second) courses for 10 minutes at a stretch is too high a price to pay for the girl-on-girl action and exploding heifers. —CODY M.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE



JELLYCAR 2

PUBLISHER: **DISNEY INTERACTIVE** GENRE: **PLATFORMER** Wii POINTS: **500**

Although it has the word *car* in the title, JellyCar 2 is more of a driving platformer than a racing game. You manipulate your squishy car to navigate various environments by speeding, bouncing, growing, shrinking, floating, sticking, and somersaulting your way through more than 36 obstacle courses. It's the simple nature of it all that wraps everything together so nicely; uncomplicated controls complement the satisfying challenge of hurtling yourself from platform to platform without a jump button, and the minimalist graphic design seems to give purpose to the slightly (but intentionally) wonky physics. With co-op play and a level creator included as well, there's a lot of solid content here for 500 points. —CODY M.

Recommended

WiiWARE

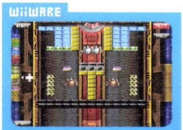
SNEEZIES

PUBLISHER: **CHILLINGO**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

The game's title is certainly appropriate. You drop some sneezing powder onto the field, kicking off a sneezing chain reaction in order to free as many bubble-enveloped Sneezies as you can. On one hand, it's a very simple game that relies more on luck than skill; on the other hand, the combination of the mellow music and the downright adorable Sneezies helps make this a truly charming title. Sneezies isn't particularly deep, but it is a relaxing way to kill some time. —JUSTIN C.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE



SOCCER BASHI

PUBLISHER: **ICON GAMES ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **ACTION**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Despite the title, Soccer Bashi isn't a soccer game. Instead, it's a soccer-themed Arkanoid-style block-breaking game. In addition to beating a stage by clearing all the blocks, you can win by sneaking your ball past a computer-controlled goalie. It's a fun idea, but the imprecise controls and overly skilled goalkeeper tend to make the game more frustrating than fun. The level editor adds some replay value, but there's no way to share your stages. —PHIL T.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE

URBANIX

PUBLISHER: **NORDCURRENT**
GENRE: **ACTION**
Wii POINTS: **500**

In mash-up terms, this is *Bob the Builder* meets *Tron*'s Light Cycles. Play begins with a parcel of undeveloped land; players steer a bulldozer (with a face) to enclose sections for development. The trick? If a scurrying enemy crosses your path before you enclose a parcel, you're toast. While there's a kernel of fun here (in its finest moments, it achieves a classic-arcade franticness similar to Pac-Man), an overwhelming sameness impedes continued play.
—PATRICK C.

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

1942

PLATFORM: **ARCADE**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1984**

1942 has inspired a lot of vertically scrolling shooters over the years, but when you get down to it, the original feels like it comes up short. There's only a handful of enemy types, the level designs are particularly bland, and the difficulty is quite unforgiving. Don't get me wrong—it's still a good game (and it's certainly a classic), but this release is suited best to fans of old-school shooters, or gamers with nostalgia. —CODY M.

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

BLACK TIGER

PLATFORM: **ARCADE**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1987**

Black Tiger isn't one of Capcom's better-known arcade releases, but it has a lot to offer. Nonlinear level exploration and light RPG elements, such as shops and permanently upgradable equipment, make this more than your typical fantasy hack-'n'-slash. Additionally, the checkpoint system makes the game much more forgiving than others of its day. None of that hides the fact, however, that the play experience feels pretty archaic. —CHRIS H.

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

EXED EXES

PLATFORM: **ARCADE**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1985**

With its vertical-scrolling gameplay and droning soundtrack, Exed Exes feels like Capcom's take on Namco's classic Xevious. Since it lacks Xevious's dual-level attack system, though, we're left with an extremely slow-paced shooter filled with bland enemies and boring power-up items. It does have a simultaneous two-player mode, however. It's hard to recommend a game as dated as this when there are so many great shooters on Virtual Console. —PHIL T.

Grumble Grumble

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

FIGHTER'S HISTORY DYNAMITE

PLATFORM: **NEOGEO**
PUBLISHER: **D4 ENTERPRISE/ DATA EAST**
GENRE: **FIGHTING**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

Fighter's History Dynamite is famous for being so similar to Street Fighter II that Capcom actually sued Data East over it. (Capcom lost.) Some resemblances are apparent, but this title ultimately pales in comparison to Capcom's premier fighting franchise. Still, Fighter's History Dynamite has solid gameplay and features Karnov as a playable character, so it has its appeal. —JUSTIN C.

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

GHOSTS'N GOBLINS

PLATFORM: **ARCADE**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1985**

There's no question that Ghosts'n Goblins is a classic, but, man, it sure is tough! The game has always been notorious for its difficulty, and while that's mostly due to tricky enemy patterns and challenging level design, part of it is attributable to stiff controls that haven't withstood the test of time. Although this arcade-perfect version does offer a few difficulty options to alleviate the pain, this is for serious retro fanatics only. —CHRIS H.

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

MAGICAL DROP III

PLATFORM: **NEOGEO**
PUBLISHER: **D4 ENTERPRISE/ DATA EAST**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1997**

Magical Drop may not have the recognition of Tetris or Bust-A-Move, but it's still a remarkably solid puzzle game. The color-matching action is satisfying, and the fast pace ensures that it's always challenging. Although the multiplayer mode is fantastic, the game also provides a very deep single-player experience. Just be aware that it's also available as part of the Data East Arcade Classics compilation for Wii. —PHIL T.

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

2nd ×0 ×13
1st ×1 ×16
6
6
A...Hit Dice Block
B...Item
R...Map
Z...Board
4th ×0 ×10
2nd ×0 ×13

MARIO PARTY 2

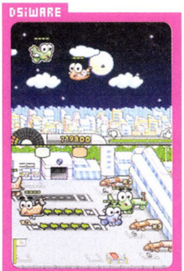
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 64** PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **PARTY** ORIGINAL RELEASE: **2000**

Before minigame collections flooded the market and wore out their welcome, the early Mario Party titles offered some pretty compelling multiplayer hijinks. This second installment was a particular favorite of mine during college, providing my roommates and me with hours of trash talk-fueled procrastination. The minigames are a significant improvement over the blister-inducing contests of the original, and the boards showcase just enough creativity without slowing things to a crawl as they did in subsequent chapters. Like most games of this nature, though, Mario Party 2 is worth playing only with a few friends. —STEVE T.

Recommended

EVALUATION STATION

DSiWARE



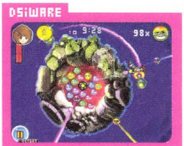
AIRPORT MANIA: NON-STOP FLIGHTS

PUBLISHER: LEMON GAMES
GENRE: ALTERNATIVE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200

Although the DSiWare edition of Airport Mania is essentially an endless-mode version of its multiplatform brethren, it holds a similar charm. The intensity steadily builds as you upgrade and direct your planes, and it quickly becomes an entertaining challenge. —CODY M.

Recommended

DSiWARE



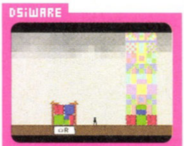
ALIEN PUZZLE ADVENTURE

PUBLISHER: MASTERTRONIC
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

Alien Puzzle Adventure plays an awful lot like Taito's classic Bust-A-Move except that instead of shooting colored bubbles upward, you rotate around a central core launching bubbles inward. It's a decent twist on the formula, but the bland, repetitive levels and slippery, inertia-fueled control cause the game to grow tiresome after a couple of rounds. The pseudo-anime art is ugly, too. —PHIL T.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



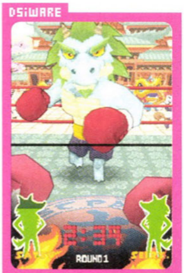
ALT-PLAY: JASON ROHRER ANTHOLOGY

PUBLISHER: SABARASA
GENRE: ALTERNATIVE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200

On the surface, there's not a whole lot to Alt-Play. The three segments of this title are more visual art than game. With retro-styled graphics, and gameplay designed to last only a few minutes, these minigames explore such themes as life, death, mourning, and loneliness. It's an interesting and thought-provoking title, but once you've played each game once, there's little reason to return to it. —PHIL T.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



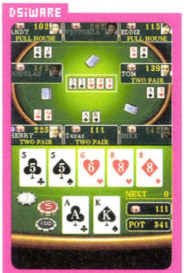
ANIMAL BOXING

PUBLISHER: GAMMICK ENTERTAINMENT
GENRE: SPORTS
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 800

The concept of Animal Boxing—punching anthropomorphic critters in the face—is pretty entertaining. The actual gameplay is not. The touch controls just don't respond the way you expect them to, and playing with the system upside down is awkward. —CHRIS H.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



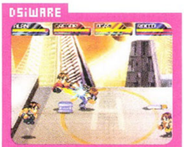
ANTE UP: TEXAS HOLD'EM

PUBLISHER: MONKEYPAW GAMES
GENRE: GAMBLING
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

Aside from an uncanny capacity for dealing me hand after hand of squat, Ante Up brings nothing unique or interesting to the (poker) table. That said, it's streamlined and passable, thus worth consideration if you're in the market for a hold 'em game. —PATRICK C.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



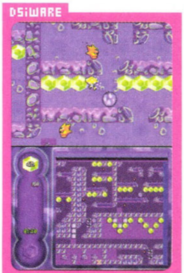
COSMO FIGHTERS

PUBLISHER: ABYLIGHT
GENRE: FIGHTING
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

If you miss the 2D arcade brawlers of yesteryear, Cosmo Fighter has some love for you; we're talking dashing kicks, random weapon drops, and, of course, totally unfair gang-ups. Depending on your philosophy, the inclusion of a stamina meter makes or breaks the game (beware, mashers of buttons!). But the real star? Download Play. A single downloader can share the fisticuffs with up to three friends, compounding the fun greatly. —PATRICK C.

Recommended

DSiWARE



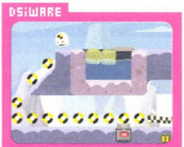
DIGGER DAN & KABOOM

PUBLISHER: VIRTUAL PLAYGROUND
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

Quite similar to the classic Boulder Dash franchise, Digger Dan & Kaboom is a grid-based puzzler with a mining (and gopher) theme. Fortunately, it's a solid clone offering plenty of levels and a refreshing number of gameplay variables. —PATRICK C.

Recommended

DSiWARE



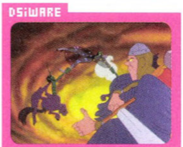
DODOGO! CHALLENGE

PUBLISHER: NEKO ENTERTAINMENT
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

DodoGo! Challenge is a continuation—rather than a sequel—of Neko's original DodoGo!, which had players shepherding dodo eggs through 2D platform puzzles using a variety of environmental gadgets. As the title suggests, the puzzles are quite challenging from the get-go, and between the difficulty and the apparent lack of tutorials (they're buried in the menu structure) the message here is loud and clear: play this only if you loved the first game. —PATRICK C.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



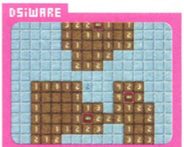
DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIME WARP

PUBLISHER: DIGITAL LEISURE
GENRE: ACTION
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 800

Like the recently released Space Ace, Dragon's Lair II features the same formulaic, memory-based gameplay of Don Bluth's original laser-disc arcade classic. However, enhancements such as collectible items, some great varied settings, and an amusing script make this sequel much more enjoyable than the first Dragon's Lair. As usual, the video and sound are compressed, but it still looks pretty darn nice. —PHIL T.

Recommended

DSiWARE



EJ PUZZLES: HOOKED

PUBLISHER: ELECTRON JUMP
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

On the surface, EJ Puzzles: Hooked is a lot like Minesweeper; both games require you to use numerical clues to select (or avoid) certain spots on the playfield. Hooked is much more than a clone, however, thanks to a level-up system, the ability to use simple tools (such as radar), and numerous upgrades for a wide variety of parameters. The gameplay remains fairly basic, but it keeps you coming back for more. —CHRIS H.

Recommended

DSiWARE

FANTASY SLOTS: ADVENTURE SLOTS AND GAMES

PUBLISHER: BIG JOHN GAMES
GENRE: GAMBLING
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

As was the case with the WiiWare version, Fantasy Slots for DSiWare is hampered by the fact that slots can barely be considered interactive. So while this title offers passable reproductions of various slot machines, complete with eye-sore visuals and an infinite supply of tapping a button that reads "Spin," it nevertheless raises the question, why pay five bucks to torture yourself? —PATRICK C.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

G.G SERIES Z-ONE

PUBLISHER: GENTERPRISE
GENRE: SHOOTER
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200

The G.G series offers bite-sized chunks of games from different genres with the common goal of besting your high score. Z-ONE tackles the ol' side-scrolling shooter, and it delivers a pretty meaty experience for its low price. The production values are surprisingly high, with graphics and sound reminiscent of 16-bit titles. The action is also satisfyingly frantic thanks to the ship's weapon, which must be constantly adjusted on the fly. —PHIL T.

Recommended

DSiWARE

GLORY DAYS—TACTICAL DEFENSE

PUBLISHER: ODENIS STUDIO
GENRE: STRATEGY
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200

Through some mystifying application of mojo, Odenis Studio has created a solid-in-its-own-right tower-defense game that plays like an arcade game. Vast 3D maps seem suspect at first, but all becomes clear once you find yourself reeling through the landscape to build, upgrade, and repair units on simultaneous warring fronts. The pace defies tower-defense convention, but it works nonetheless. —PHIL T.

Recommended

DSiWARE

Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
11460
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

JUST SING CHRISTMAS VOL. 2

PUBLISHER: DTP YOUNG ENTERTAINMENT
GENRE: RHYTHM
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200

The original Just Sing! DSiWare title felt bare bones with five songs. So what does that say about this holiday edition—which costs just as much—that contains only *two* songs? You'd be better off caroling on your own. —PHIL T.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

PAUL'S MONSTER ADVENTURE

PUBLISHER: AGETEC
GENRE: ADVENTURE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

Considering that this game's predecessor—Paul's Shooting Adventure—was filled with affordable, straightforward, old-school fun, I was expecting more of the same this time out. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Paul's Monster Adventure consists of fetching objects and avoiding foes (you have a limited number of attacks), and outside of an entertaining story, nothing about it is very compelling. —CHRIS H.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

PETZ CATZ FAMILY

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
GENRE: SIMULATION
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 800

If you can get past its gross abuse of the letter *Z*, Petz Catz Family offers the experience of buying and caring for virtual cats. While the models are appropriately adorable and the animations are adequate, the shallowness and redundancy of the gameplay makes the experience excessively mechanical, which in turn makes it difficult to bond with your kitties. But that's probably a good thing, since the game lets you sell them off if you choose! —PATRICK C.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

LEVEL
SCORE

ROCKS N' ROCKETS

PUBLISHER: TIKGAMES
GENRE: ACTION
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

At first glance, Rocks N' Rockets is an obvious Missile Command clone. Of course, playing Missile Command with a stylus is fairly easy, so TikGames complicates things using a (too standard) fire/ice dynamic (e.g., players destroy ice asteroids with fire rockets). Unfortunately, even Missile Command fans who might enjoy the basic premise will likely feel that the stylus turns this into glorified Whac-a-Mole. —PATRICK C.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

3000
2400
2000
1600
1200
800
500
ACTION
DRAW
9400

THE SELLER

PUBLISHER: CIRCLE ENTERTAINMENT
GENRE: CARD GAME
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

The Seller certainly gets credit for jaw-dropping originality; it's a card game in which players manipulate competitors and a public fund to liquidate resources. The complexity of the game is equally jaw-dropping, and the process of flipping through the card descriptions, rules, and instructions will likely boil your blood with rage. But sticking it out brings strange rewards; it's oblique and tedious at times, but crazily unique, as well. —PATRICK C.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

SURFACER+

PUBLISHER: LEXIS NUMÉRIQUE
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

Surfacer+ is a simple game: Avoid the small particles bouncing around while making flowers bloom as big as possible. At first glance it could come off as a relaxing puzzler due to its hushed music and drab color tones. Unfortunately, one glance is about all it takes to realize the gameplay is much too shallow, even at five bucks, and the 15-second loop of music is quick to irritate. I had my fill after a half-hour. —DAVID M.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

Chess
CASTLE
ROOK
BISHOP
QUEEN
KING
PAWN
GRANDMASTER
PIECE
BLACK
WHITE
SACRIFICE
ENPASSANT
CAPTURE
DRAW
03:50
6:13

WORD SEARCHER II

PUBLISHER: DIGITAL LEISURE
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

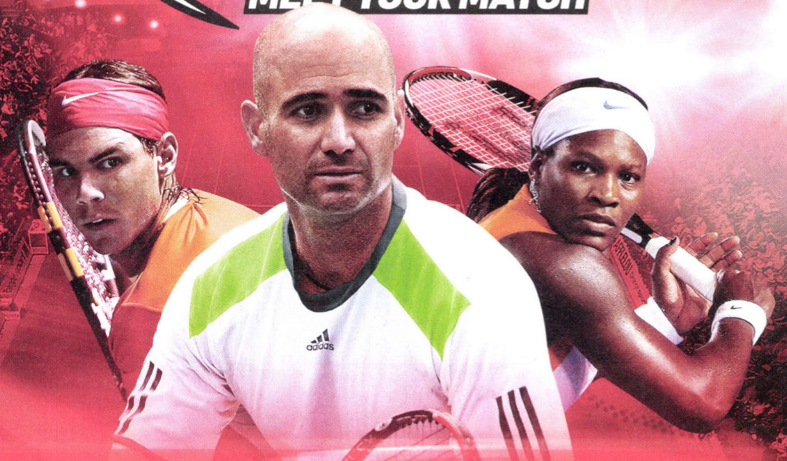
Word Searcher II is almost identical to its predecessor, the only difference being that it features 100 all-new oddball categories of words to search for. That's great if you're a die-hard word-search fan going on a really long car ride, but not so great if you're anybody else. The touch-screen controls work well, but the presentation is nothing more than functional, and the minimalistic music will probably put you to sleep. —CHRIS H.

Hmmm...

2K SPORTS

TOPSPIN 4

MEET YOUR MATCH



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2K SPORTS

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THE 3D REVOLUTION BEGINS

OFF
X
Y
A
B
POWER
SELECT
HOME
START

No matter how technically powerful or feature-packed a new piece of hardware is, in the end all that matters is the quality of its games. Fortunately, as excited as we are about the Nintendo 3DS system's 3D visuals and camera, its gyro sensors, and the new Circle Pad, its strongest selling point is a stellar lineup of upcoming titles. From fabled first-party franchises such as The Legend of Zelda, Pilotwings, and Kid Icarus to top third-party series such as Street Fighter, Resident Evil, and Dead or Alive, Nintendo 3DS already promises something for everyone. We had the chance to play many of the biggest upcoming games—for both the handheld's launch window and beyond—and we've packed our impressions into the following pages. So enjoy this detailed look at what the future holds for gaming, and get excited—the system's March 27th release is nearly here!

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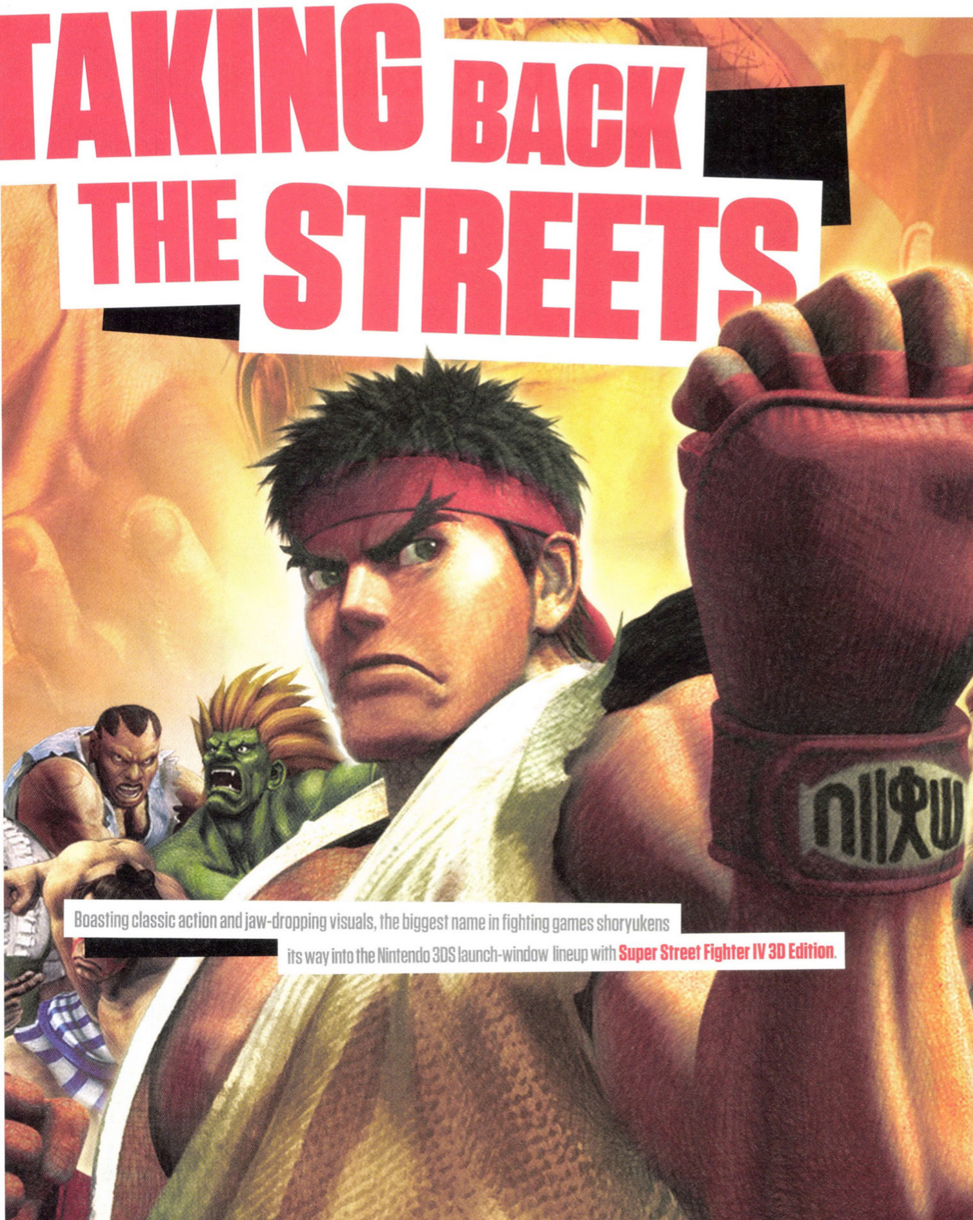
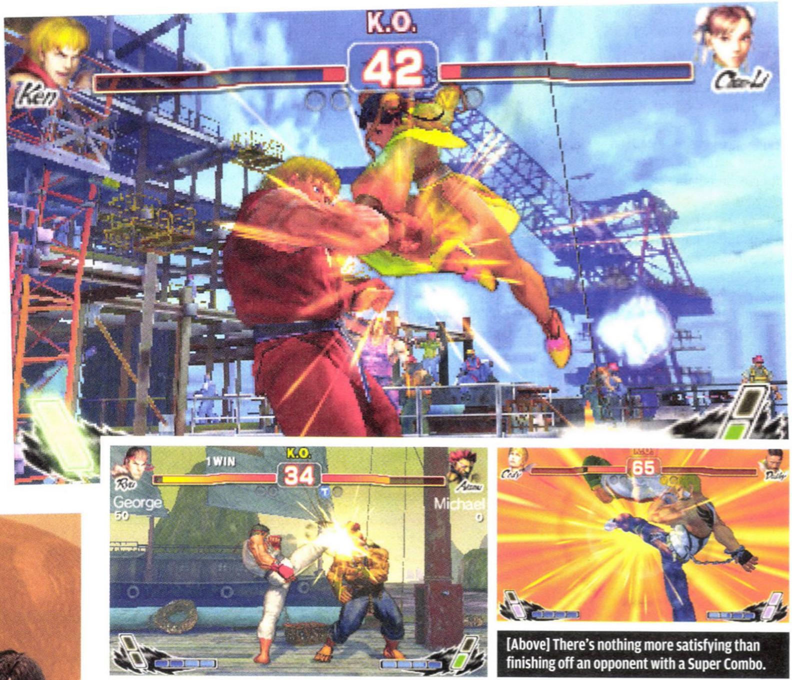
TAKING BACK THE STREETS



Boasting classic action and jaw-dropping visuals, the biggest name in fighting games shoryukens its way into the Nintendo 3DS launch-window lineup with **Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition**.

BY **CHRIS HOFFMAN**

PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM** DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM/DIMPS** RELEASE: **SPRING 2011**



[Above] There's nothing more satisfying than finishing off an opponent with a Super Combo.

When it comes to fighting games, there's nothing bigger than Capcom's Street Fighter series. Though obviously not the originator of the one-on-one fighting genre, Street Fighter II: The World Warrior spawned an empire when it was released in the early 1990s, giving rise to countless sequels, spin-offs, and imitators, as well as movies, cartoons, action figures, comic books, and a die-hard fan base that—even years later—still swears by the Street Fighter franchise's precise gameplay and intense action. Now the series's latest (and potentially greatest) installment—Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition—is one of the premier titles for the Nintendo 3DS system.

In case you've been living in a cave for the last two decades—or simply haven't had an opportunity to play a Street Fighter game (not counting Virtual Console releases, the last one to grace a Nintendo platform was Street Fighter Alpha 3 for Game Boy Advance in 2002)—what you need to know is that the Street Fighter name guarantees an explosive contest of skill and strength between colorful martial artists from around the globe. As players have come to expect from any good fighting game, Street Fighter titles are packed with an arsenal of character-specific attacks, as well as numerous modes in which you can test your skills against human- and computer-controlled opponents.

In many respects, Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition isn't any different from its predecessors, but that's what makes it so promising: it taps into the same vein of pick-up-and-play fun that ignited gamers' interest in the fighting genre in the first place, while bringing it into the modern era with hyperdetailed polygonal graphics, online gameplay, dual-screen functionality, and—of course—impressive stereoscopic 3D visual effects.

RETURN OF THE WORLD WARRIORS

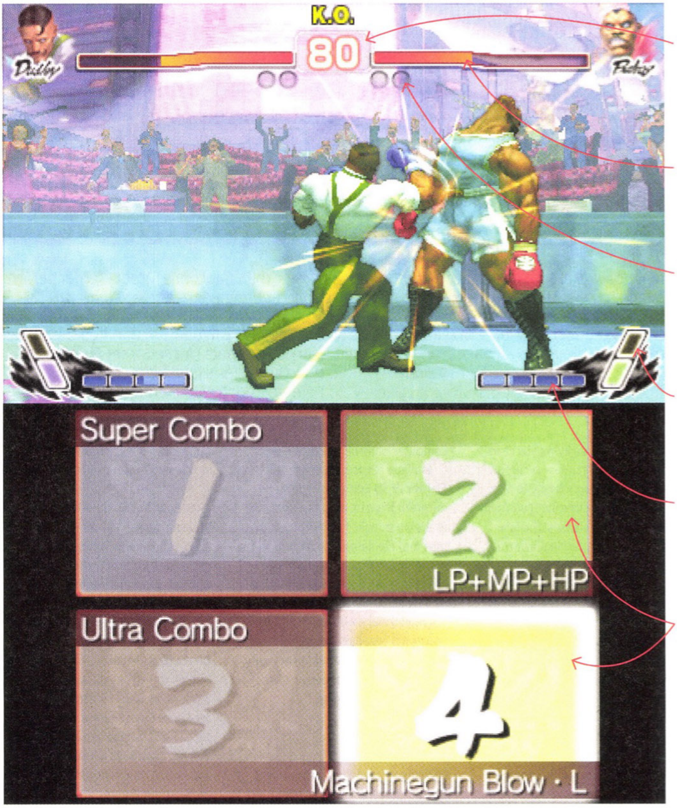
Even if you haven't played a Street Fighter game since Street Fighter II hit the Super NES, you'll feel right at home with Super Street Fighter IV. In fact, all 12 original Street Fighter II characters are featured in Super Street Fighter IV's massive 35-person lineup. Among the roster are some of the most iconic fighting-game heroes ever created, such as headband-wearing Ryu, his friend/rival Ken, green beast-man Blanka, rubber-limbed yoga master Dhalsim, and Chun-Li, who calls herself the strongest woman in the world. Two warriors are brand-new for Super Street Fighter IV—specifically, Turkish oil wrestler Hakan and evil Taekwondo practitioner Juci—while others originated in other Street Fighter titles. With so much diversity, every player will assuredly find a few favorites.

As usual, each character has his or her own unique move set consisting of three types of punches, three types of kicks, throws, a variety of special moves, powerful Super Combos, and more. Recent additions to the Street Fighter repertoire include Focus Attacks (which let you chain special moves together and break through an opponent's defenses), EX Specials (powered-up versions of special moves), and Ultra Combos (meter-based desperation attacks that become available as you take damage). If you're a fighting-game vet, you'll have no problem jumping in and executing moves via Control Pad or Circle Pad motions (the choice is yours) combined with button presses. If that's not your style, however, you can opt to use a new touch-screen interface. Dubbed Lite Controls, this fully customizable scheme enables you to perform special moves, Super Combos, and Ultra Combos by pressing four touch-screen hot keys.

Lite Controls not only allow newcomers to easily get into the action, but also permit longtime fans to be more experimental and to skillfully play as characters they don't normally use. Don't like Zangief because it's nearly impossible to spin the Control Pad 720 degrees and simultaneously press three punch buttons to unleash his Ultimate Atomic Buster? With Lite Controls the move is only a touch-screen press away. Of course, if you think using such shortcuts is cheating, you can choose Pro

Prepare for Battle

There's plenty to keep an eye on besides your opponent.



TIMER
If you run out of time, whoever has the most vitality remaining will win. Rounds last 99 seconds by default, but you can change their duration.

VITALITY GAUGE
It all comes down to this. If you drain you opponent's Vitality Gauge, you win. If he drains yours, you lose.

WIN MARKERS
Different icons are displayed depending on how you've achieved victory. You usually need to win two out of three rounds, but that number is adjustable.

REVENGE GAUGE
This meter increases as you take damage. Once it fills up halfway you can use your Ultra Combo attack.

SUPER GAUGE
As you perform moves and attack your opponent you'll build up this gauge. Use it to unleash Super Combos, EX Specials, and Focus Cancels.

LITE CONTROLS
Fully customizable Lite Controls on the touch screen enable you to perform special moves, Super Combos, and Ultra Combos with ease. Lite Controls can be replaced by Pro Controls if you wish.

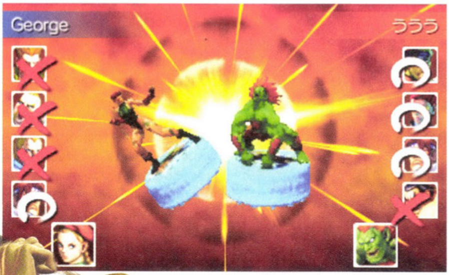
Controls instead, which allow you to assign basic button combinations to the touch-screen hot keys (such as pressing Strong Punch and Strong Kick together to execute a taunt).

Naturally, touch-screen controls aren't the only new feature. The game also introduces an optional perspective called 3D mode. True, the standard view uses polygonal graphics and features impressive 3D effects (most notably in the backgrounds), but 3D mode enables you to play from an over-the-shoulder viewpoint. Admittedly, the angle initially makes it tougher to judge when you're in range for an attack, which then affects your timing, but it allows for a deeper view of the battlefield and more impressive use of the hardware's 3D capabilities. After some practice, 3D mode could potentially be every bit as rewarding as the traditional side-view battles.

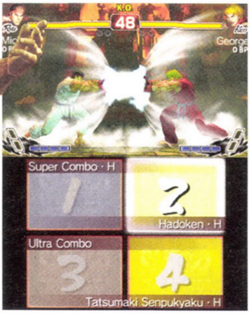
STREET-WALKING

Of course, one of the main reasons for Street Fighter's enduring popularity has nothing to do with snazzy new technology. People love playing the series simply because of the strategic thrill of facing off against friends and beating the heck out of them—which you can do in multiple ways in Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition.

If you're looking for a fight, you need go no further than the game's Internet Match mode. Unlike other launch-window titles that let you compete only against players in your region, Super Street Fighter IV lets you challenge players from around the entire world. Think you're the best? Now you can prove it. Additionally, you can square off in local wireless battles, in either 3D mode or standard side-view mode. (Both players don't need to use the same perspective.) But what about your friends who haven't bought the game yet? Though each player will need his own cartridge to get the full Super Street Fighter IV experience, you can use the Game Sharing option to send your pals a demo version featuring a limited selection of characters and backgrounds.



[Above] Figure Collection mode lets you fight other players in an all-new way.



Seth's Top Tips to Fight Like a Pro

(Or at Least to Not Suck)

Ready to take your skills to the next level? To get the inside line on Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition strategies, we went to Capcom's Seth Killian—the game's special advisor and a former professional Street Fighter player. (He's also the guy the game's final boss was named after.) Here are Seth's top five tips for success.

1. FIND A CHARACTER THAT WORKS FOR YOU.
Do you love crazy offense and creating tense situations? Do you tend to prefer a slower, more strategic pace? Do you like a mix of the two? There are Street Fighter characters that work well for all personality types, so experiment a bit to find who fits your personal style—you may even surprise yourself! This has also never been easier than on SSFIV 3D Edition since the Lite touch-pad controls mean you don't necessarily have to struggle to do a challenging special move, so you can choose freely from the entire cast, not just those characters where you feel confident in your ability to do their moves consistently.

2. LEARN YOUR "SAFE" ATTACKS.
Most normal punches and kicks are relatively low-risk, but although they look flashy, almost every special move in the game leaves you pretty vulnerable if it doesn't connect. Find your "safe" or less risky attacks with your chosen character, and develop your offense around those moves. Special moves like M. Bison's light-kick version of his Scissor Kick are almost impossible to counter after you block them, so by using this kind of attack more frequently, you can generate good offense without leaving yourself wide open.

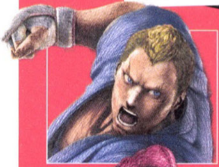
3. LEARN TO BLOCK!
It's not as exciting as throwing Ultra Combos around, but blocking is an essential key to winning. Just marching forward and mashing buttons isn't going to get you very far, so if you're getting beat down a lot, you probably aren't blocking enough. You'd be amazed at how many players you can beat just by blocking strategically and letting them do something that leaves them vulnerable. There are very few attacks that can beat blocking, so recognize its power and remember to block rather than always just attacking.

4. CUSTOMIZE YOUR CONTROL PANEL.
SSFIV 3D Edition lets you choose customized touch-panel controls for every character, so don't just go with the default options—think about the moves you personally use most often, or choose moves you find most challenging to perform and set them to be available at the touch of one button. The ability to do even the most difficult move with a quick touch opens up a lot of new possibilities.

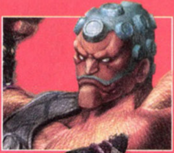
5. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOUR OPPONENT IS THINKING.
It's easy to go on autopilot and just keep jumping at someone to land your big combo, but when you have mastered the basics of Street Fighter, it all comes down to good strategy and predicting your opponent's behavior. Look for patterns ("this guy always jumps at me," or "this guy always does an uppercut after I knock him down," etc.), and exploit them. If you can read your opponent's mind and predict his actions—even a little bit—you can counter their moves easily and you will start down the path to true Street Fighter mastery.

Here Comes a New Challenger

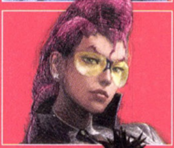
With every offering in the Street Fighter series, the cast continues to grow and evolve. These are the newest additions to the roster, having debuted in Street Fighter IV or Super Street Fighter IV.



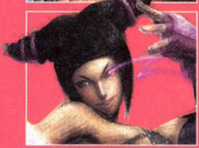
ABEL
This amnesiac was rescued by Guile's friend Charlie. Abel is a master of powerful throws.



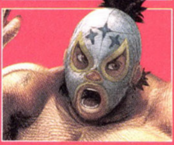
HAKAN
Talk about greasy. Hakan is a champion oil wrestler, as well as president of a cooking-oil company.



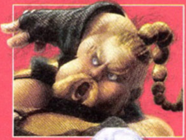
C. VIPER
Using gadgets to enhance her natural fighting skills, C. Viper is a cunning secret agent.



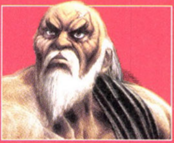
JURI
This evildoer's left eye has been replaced with a mysterious implant that gives her tremendous power.



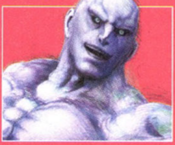
EL FUERTE
Believe it or not, El Fuerte is both a luchador and a chef. His speed is his greatest asset.



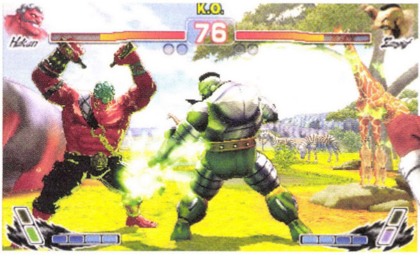
RUFUS
He might look out of shape, but Rufus's unpredictable offense makes him a worthy adversary.

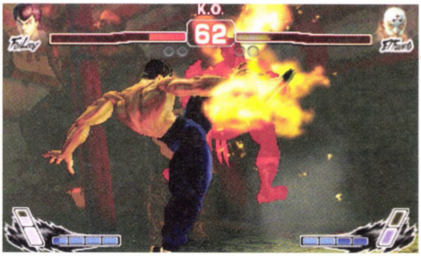


GOUKEN
Ryu and Ken's sensei has been part of series lore for years, but he only recently became playable.



SETH
Seth is the game's final boss. He runs SIN, a criminal organization connected to M. Bison's Shadaloo.





Furthermore, if you're itching for a fight but can't find any opposition right off the bat, you can turn on the Fight Request option when you play Arcade mode. With Fight Request on, you'll automatically challenge other like-minded players (either locally or online) when they enter the fray. And don't worry about getting into an unfair fight: you can customize your versus-mode parameters to face only other players using Lite Controls or Pro Controls if you wish. On the other hand, if you need a breather from all the combat, then you can just kick back and watch your friends fight in spectator mode.

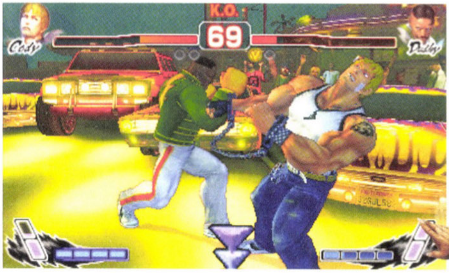
The game features an all-new competitive mode, too: Figure Collection mode. The mode enables you to assemble a team consisting of five figurines of your favorite Street Fighter characters, each with their own statistics in categories such as power, defense, and speed. Unlike standard versus battles, Figure Collection fights are passive affairs that take advantage of the hardware's StreetPass functionality. Once you've selected your team, all you need to do is go for a stroll with your Nintendo 3DS in your pocket (it can even be in sleep mode); if you encounter any other players doing the same, you'll automatically engage in a figurine battle, in which your stats will determine the victor.

Although every player starts with the same figurines (one of each character in the game), you're able to distribute attribute points to customize the figurines to your liking. You can also obtain new figurines through multiple means. Capcom representatives were unable to provide the full details of how to build up your figurine collection, but they've confirmed that you can obtain new figurines by spending in-game coins in a Figure Slots minigame, by simply trading figurines with other players, or by using passwords that will be distributed using the Nintendo 3DS system's SpotPass communications feature. With 500 figurines in total, Figure Collection mode will offer plenty of depth for completists.

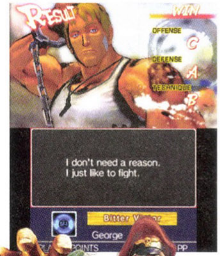
FIGHT TO THE FINISH

Rounding out the game's extensive feature set are a free-form Training mode (in which you can adjust a number of parameters to suit your needs) and a Challenge mode (which lets you hone your skills by performing specific moves and combos). And you won't need to purchase any pricey downloadable content; the extra costumes from the console version are all scheduled to come built right into 3D Edition. (Unfortunately, a few other console features, such as online leaderboards, won't be making the transition either.)

What Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition *does* provide, however, is nothing less than thoroughly astonishing—it's a full-fledged next-gen fighting game in handheld form, enhanced with a new level of immersive visuals that only Nintendo's latest system can provide. The series that set the bar for fighting-game greatness might also be setting the standard for quality on the Nintendo 3DS.



[Below] No victory would be complete without a quippy remark.



I don't need a reason.
I just like to fight.

Six Questions with producer Yoshinori Ono

Without producer Yoshinori Ono, there probably wouldn't be a Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition. It was his idea, after all, to revive the classic Street Fighter franchise and update it for modern gaming systems. We recently conversed with Ono to gain further insight into the game's development.

NINTENDO POWER For those not familiar with Street Fighter IV in its previous iterations, what was your overall philosophy when creating the Street Fighter IV games?

YOSHINORI ONO My main objective was to deliver an enhanced fighting-game experience to everyone who has fond memories of playing the Street Fighter series during the Super NES era. Our goal was not to reinvent the genre, but to recapture the excitement that players felt back in those days.

Why did you want to bring Street Fighter IV to the Nintendo 3DS?

I see Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition as an opportunity to take the series a little bit closer to that Super NES-era experience. This version of the game will expose the series to a new audience, and its portability allows players to have impromptu pick-up games, just as they would for something like chess or poker. This version of the game features flashy 3D graphics, of course, but it's the enhanced connectivity features that got me excited about the potential to re-create that communal style of gameplay.

What do the 3D visuals add to the experience?

Well, specifically for the fighting genre and Street Fighter, I think that this visual expression is something new for fans of the series. But, more than that, I have been trying to come up with ideas that let players feel more realistic sensations for all my upcoming projects. The Nintendo 3DS hardware allows me to deliver on some of that vision.

What characters would you recommend for newcomers to the Street Fighter series?

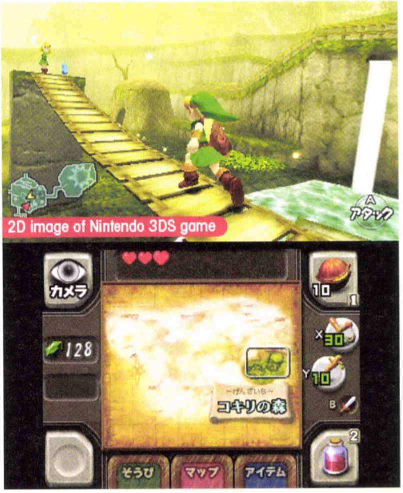
Personally, I would recommend newcomers start with Ryu and Ken, as they're very well-balanced characters. But players who are returning to the series should give Cammy and Juri a try, as they lend themselves to fast-paced and exciting battles that will probably feel like a whole new experience. We also have several characters from Street Fighter III, which was known for its highly technical gameplay. So players should try out as many characters as possible in order to pick a favorite who best suits their play style.

Why do you think fighting games have been enjoying a resurgence of late?

Actually, I wouldn't call it a "resurgence" at all. Certainly not compared to the peak of the genre's popularity back in the '90s. I think a lot of the major fighting-game franchises just had sequels around the same time, and people have interpreted that as a resurgence. But the core fans of the genre have been playing them all along—both the old-school classics and the major, ongoing franchises like Tekken. For there to be a resurgence, I think we need to satisfy those core fans while also tuning our games to appeal to a much wider audience.

Finally, there's another high-profile fighting game coming out at the launch of the Nintendo 3DS. Care to engage in a little friendly trash talk and tell our readers why they should buy Super Street Fighter IV instead of that game?

Once you get your hands on Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition, you won't even care about other fighting games. If you factor in the amount of fun you can have playing online, the thoroughly satisfying single-player modes, and the incredible volume of content in the game, it's clear that purchasing Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition would be a wise investment.



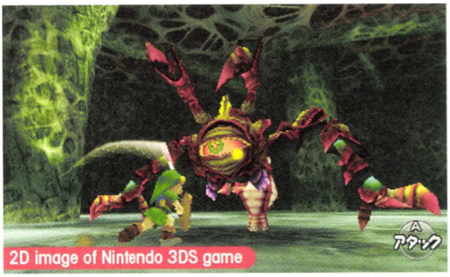
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D

YOU KNOW IT. You love it. It's the classic The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, and this groundbreaking, highly acclaimed epic has never looked better than it does on Nintendo 3DS. For the most part, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D plays just like it did when it was originally released on Nintendo 64—after all, there's no reason to mess with one of the most beloved games of all time—but it's now enhanced visually with vastly improved textures, upgraded models for many of the characters (especially the hero, Link), polygonal graphics in place of prerendered backgrounds, and, of course, a new sensation of 3D depth.

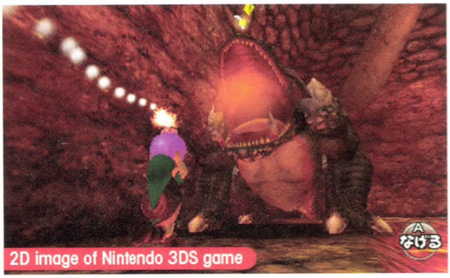
The game also features several interface improvements. Not only can you quickly equip items and gear via the touch screen, but whereas the original version of the game allowed you to equip three items at once, the Nintendo 3DS version allows you to equip four: to the X and Y Buttons, as well as to two touch-screen buttons labeled 1 and 2. Additionally, when you're looking around or aiming weapons (such as the slingshot) in first-person mode you can change your viewing angle by moving the system (thanks to the hardware's built-in gyro sensor). Don't worry, traditionalists—you can aim and look around using the Circle Pad, as well.

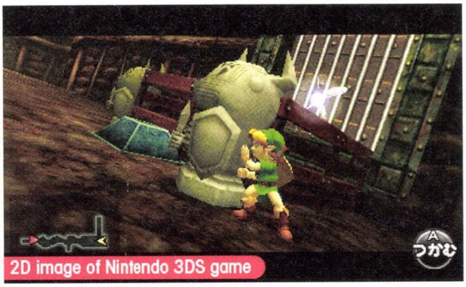
In other respects the adventure promises to remain true to its original form. That means you'll still witness young Link leaving Kokiri Forest to explore the vast world beyond; you'll still obtain and use numerous tools, such as a bow, a hammer, a boomerang, and the Hookshot to defeat enemies and solve countless puzzles; you'll still ride on horseback across the plains of Hyrule; you'll still seek out dungeons and defeat imposing bosses; and you'll still manipulate time itself as you endeavor to save the land from the clutches of the evil Ganondorf. Whether you're a longtime Ocarina of Time fan or you've never played a Zelda game before, this is one adventure you won't want to miss. —**CHRIS H.**

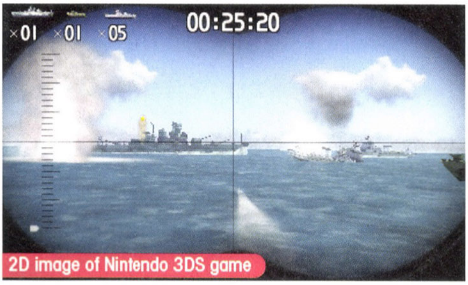
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: 2011

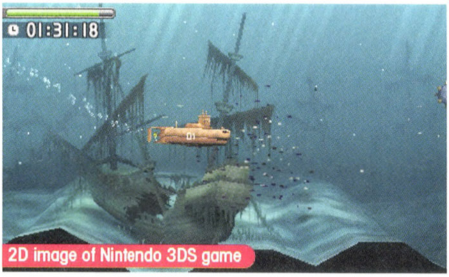


Link's quest to save Hyrule will take him to a variety of tricky dungeons, where he'll face bosses such as Gohma [above] and King Dodongo [below].



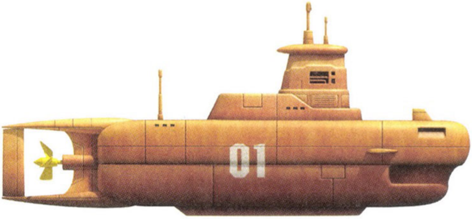






[Above] You'll discover all sorts of interesting things beneath the waves.

Steel Diver

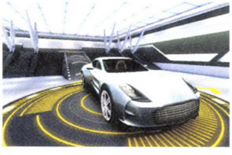


STEEL DIVER is a lot like a real submarine; its presence might not be immediately noticeable, but just when you're not suspecting anything it sneaks up and blasts you (in this case, with unique, compelling gameplay). This isn't a game you can just jump into; it requires precision and patience if you want to reap its rewards. The bulk of this launch-window release is controlled via a touch-screen interface, creating a mild sim experience; using sliders, knobs, and buttons, you'll control your submarine's depth, speed, pitch, and more as you navigate side-scrolling caverns, destroy barricades, avoid mines, and sink enemy ships. (You'll also have to tap the touch screen to repair leaks if you take damage.) There are three types of sub to choose from—the ND-01 Manatee, the ND-03 Blue Shark, and the ND-05 Serpent—with different levels of complexity for players of varying skill levels; the Manatee, for example, can fire torpedoes straight upward, whereas you'll have to carefully adjust your firing angle with the Blue Shark. The game also offers a first-person periscope mode in which you change your viewpoint by rotating the system (and yourself) 360 degrees, and a strategic two-player versus mode. —**CHRIS H.**

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** **DEVELOPER:** **NINTENDO** **RELEASE:** **SPRING 2011**

Asphalt 3D

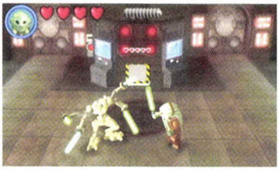
1st -00:00.92
2nd -00:00.16
3rd 00:00.00
Total time 00:17.520



ASPHALT 3D just might be the most accessible racing game coming to the Nintendo 3DS handheld. Boasting an easy-to-use power-slide system (you simply tap the brake to start sliding and tap it again to stop), a bevy of game modes (including Vigilante mode, in which your goal is to knock other racers off the track, and a police-chase mode), and 40 customizable vehicles, the game has a lot on offer for both casual and hardcore racing fans. —**CHRIS H.**

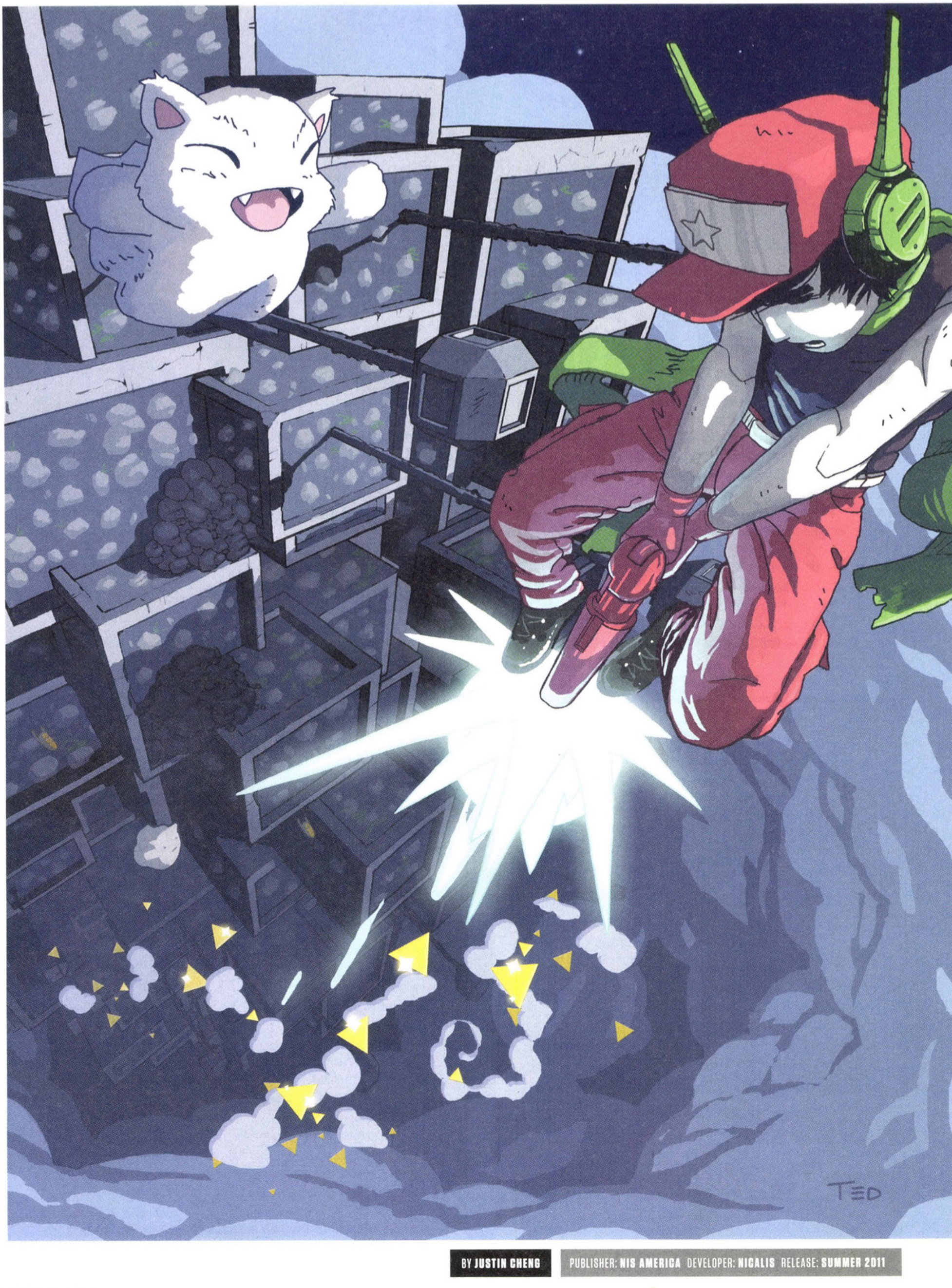
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **GAMELOFT**
RELEASE: **SPRING 2011**

LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars



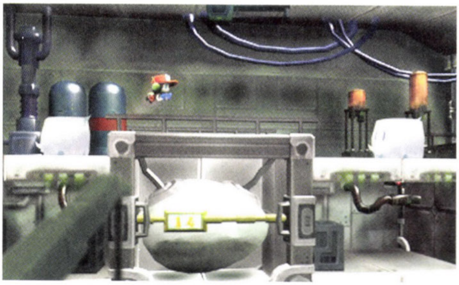
PAST PORTABLE versions of the LEGO games have had to make some compromises, but LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars promises to go all-out. Not only is it the best-looking handheld LEGO Star Wars game to date, but it adds some cool touch-screen interaction for Force powers, such as drawing a circle to carve a hole in a door with your lightsaber. Naturally, the game features plenty of playable characters, including vintage-trilogy heroes like Luke and Chewbacca. —**CHRIS H.**

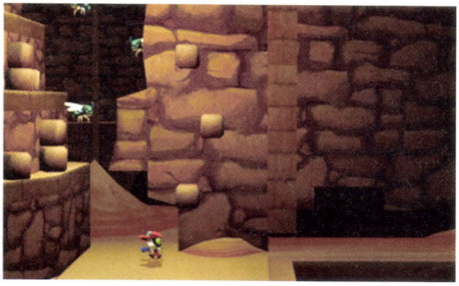
PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS** **DEVELOPER:** **TT GAMES** **RELEASE:** **MARCH 2011**



BY **JUSTIN CHENG**

PUBLISHER: **NIS AMERICA** DEVELOPER: **NICALIS** RELEASE: **SUMMER 2011**



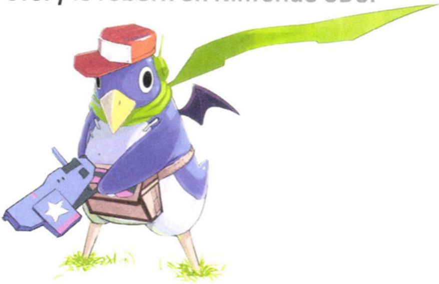


Return to the Underground

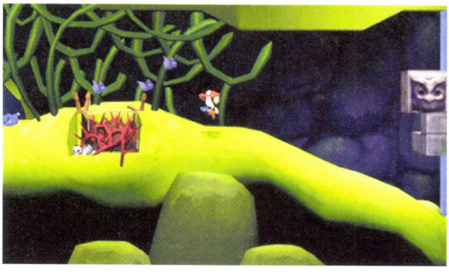
Brand-new look, same great action—Cave Story is reborn on Nintendo 3DS.

One of the best titles we played last year (as evidenced by the two NP Awards it earned in this very issue), Cave Story is an action game in the style of Metroid in which you interact with an odd cast of characters and shoot your way through vast caverns. After impressing us on WiiWare and DSiWare, Cave Story is primed to make its Nintendo 3DS debut (as a retail product)—and a lot has changed in the transition. The winning shooting-and-platforming gameplay—as well as the solid English localization—remains intact, but developer Nicalis has completely overhauled the graphics, eschewing the original Cave Story's decidedly old-school-looking sprites for polygons. "Everything is all-new for the Nintendo 3DS," remarks Cave Story 3D game designer (and creator of the Cave Story franchise) Daisuke "Pixel" Amaya. "The game and its assets have been created by the development team from scratch. I feel very confident that players will be pleased with what we're able to do with the Nintendo 3DS. It's a very powerful console, portable or not, and it has more technical features than I would have ever expected to develop on."

The power of the Nintendo 3DS is used to augment not just the characters and scenery, but the overall sense of immersion, as Pixel explains: "The original Cave Story was strictly a 2D game. I wasn't able to do any fancy 3D or too much multilayered parallax. Actually, there was only really two layers of movement at any time. With the Nintendo 3DS we can implement many layers of 3D and also add elements to the foreground and background to heighten the sense of 3D and depth." The graphics also go a long way toward keeping the Cave Story experience fresh. Pixel shares his thoughts: "Playing a game with 3D images by itself is very attractive and exciting! The players should be able to play the same game that they know but with a completely different feel because it'll be in 3D."



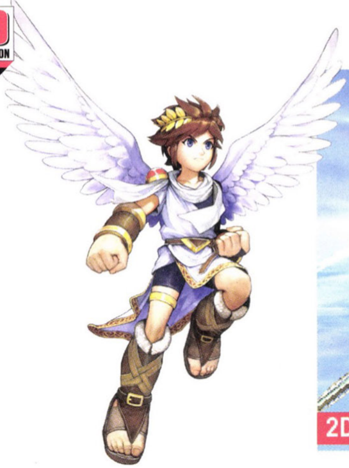
It's only fitting that the NIS America-published Cave Story 3D includes a prinny, the company's de facto mascot.

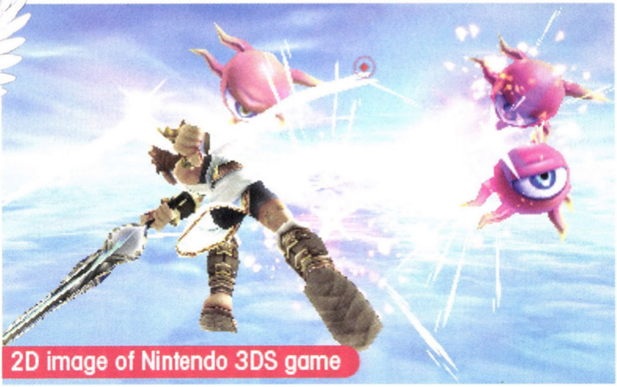


More than just the visuals, though, have undergone changes—the music, for example, now hits at "a much deeper level," Tyrone Rodriguez, producer at Nicalis and audio director for Cave Story 3D, tells us. "With so much time and manpower spent into creating great 3D environments and characters, we can't cut corners on the music. It needs to match the 3D world, so we've spent considerable time getting a sound and feel that Daisuke and I are happy with."

Other features being considered include placing a map on the bottom screen—which addresses a minor criticism we had when playing the DSiWare version—as well as touch-screen functionality for the map and inventory systems. "The development team at Nicalis did take player feedback into consideration for the WiiWare and DSiWare version," Pixel shares. "I feel it's very important to have an understanding of what players want, and assess whether or not something improves the overall experience." (Two things that you won't see in the game are StreetPass functionality and downloadable content.) As for what else Cave Story 3D has to offer—well, Pixel wants to keep some things under wraps. "When possible, I like players to experience Cave Story without any prior information. That said, we do have some surprises in store for anyone who has played a game in the series before."

Regardless of whether you're a Cave Story newbie or veteran, Cave Story 3D should be something worth getting psyched for—a sentiment Pixel himself shares. "I am even more excited for the final product than I was when I made Cave Story for WiiWare and DSiWare." The wait until Cave Story 3D's summer release will certainly be a tough one.





2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

Kid Icarus: Uprising

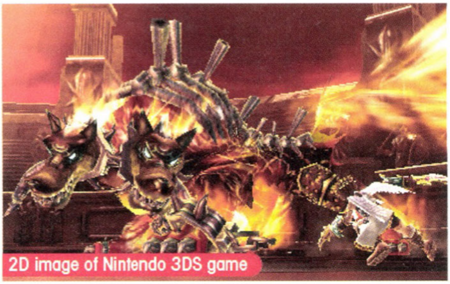
SINCE ITS SURPRISING reveal last June, Kid Icarus: Uprising has been one of the most anticipated games for the Nintendo 3DS system—not only because it's the long-awaited return of the Kid Icarus series after a 20-year hiatus, but because it's the latest game from Super Smash Bros. mastermind Masahiro Sakurai. Now that we've had a chance to spend some quality hands-on time with the title, we're pleased to report that it's living up to our lofty expectations.

As we've reported previously, this game is not the Kid Icarus of old; it's an all-out action-shooter that feels like the gaming equivalent of a rollercoaster ride. The pace is lightning-quick, the enemies are nonstop, and there's something thrilling around every turn and beyond every peak. During the game's on-rails aerial segments (which make up the first portion of each stage), you'll move protagonist Pit with the Circle Pad, shoot with the L Button, and aim by sliding the stylus along the touch screen. Though it's tempting to just hold down the L Button to lay down a constant stream of fire, it's not necessarily the best tactic; if you pause a bit between attacks you'll unleash a powered-up projectile, and if you hold the targeting reticle over an enemy for a second before firing, your attacks become even stronger.

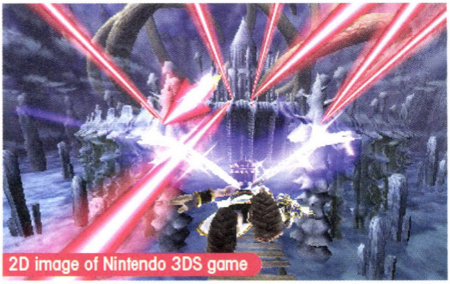
2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

Whether on the ground or in the air, Pit is ready to fight Medusa's forces.

2D image of Nintendo 3DS game



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

The aerial sections also provide an amazing example of the Nintendo 3DS system's visual capabilities; the broad vistas are gorgeous and grand, and the 3D effects work spectacularly, especially when it comes to judging how close you are to an incoming enemy barrage.

The on-foot segments of each stage play a bit differently; you have more freedom of movement, and you're able to manually control the camera via the touch screen. You'll also have more opportunities to slay bad guys with up-close-and-personal melee strikes, more chances to find items (such as health-replenishing meat), and more encounters with interactive elements—including rails to grind, spiked traps to dodge, and jump pads that launch Pit high into the air. Naturally, each stage culminates in a boss fight, one of the most impressive of which is against a massive, multiple-story-tall Grim Reaper. Needless to say, we can't wait to play the final product. —**CHRIS H.**

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO/SORA LTD.
RELEASE: 2011

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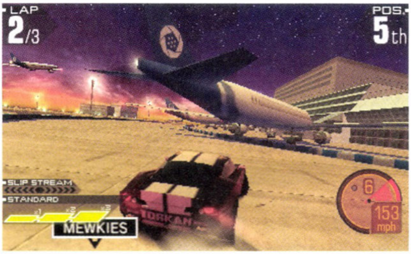
TEST DRIVE

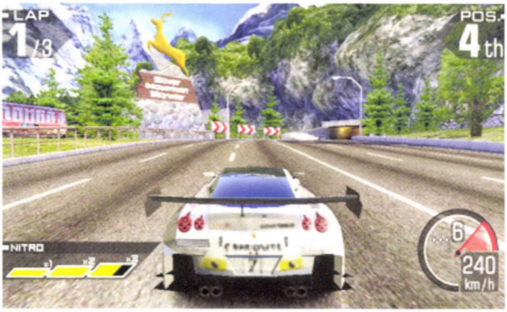
With exceptional styling and a lot under the hood, Ridge Racer 3D is one sweet ride.

PHANTOMILE
BURNINGFORCE
93
PHOZON

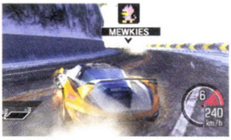
BY **CHRIS SLATE**

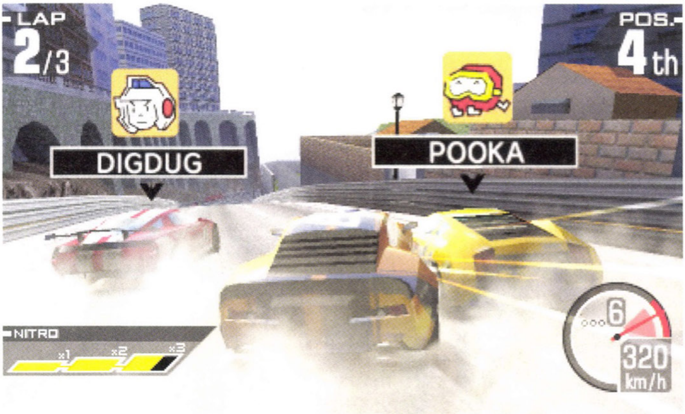
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI** DEVELOPER: **NAMCO BANDAI** RELEASE: **SPRING 2011**





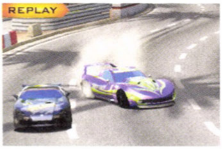
[Below] Player icons tell you who you're passing.





It's Riiiiidge Racerrr! If you imagined the voice of a cheesy announcer when you read that, then you've probably played enough Ridge Racer to know why the long-running series has such a loyal following: cool cars; gorgeous tracks; and fast, arcade-style racing with one of the most satisfying drift mechanics the genre has ever seen. If you aren't already a fan, here's why you should be: Ridge Racer 3D will likely provide one of the most full-featured gameplay experiences available early in the life of the Nintendo 3DS system.

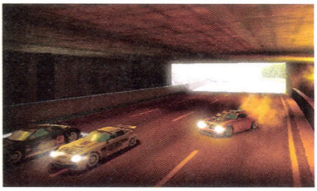
[Below] Slick post-race replays are back and sexier than ever in 3D.



THIS YEAR'S MODEL

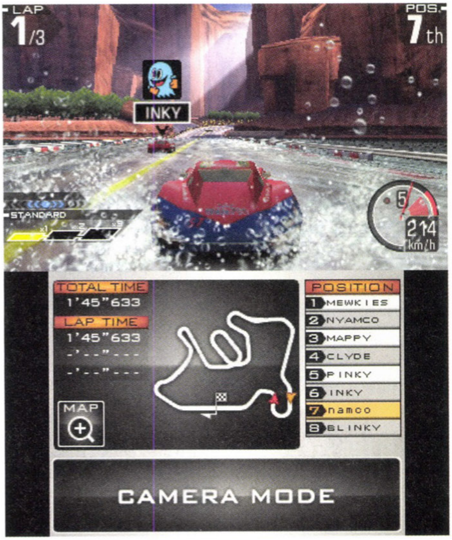
While the series's stellar reputation wasn't earned on Nintendo systems—Ridge Racer DS, the franchise's previous entry for a Nintendo platform, was especially bad—our play test of Ridge Racer 3D indicates that Namco Bandai is bringing its A game to Nintendo 3DS. The onscreen action looks nice and plays as well as it ever has on a handheld, and there is a wealth of content to delve into, such as a meaty Grand Prix mode composed of multiple races at each of the game's approximately 30 courses (that number includes both normal and reverse versions of each). About 20% of the tracks are brand-new, and the rest are taken from past Ridge Racer games. The new courses feature an American-leaning look inspired by locations such as the winding mountain passes of the Pacific Northwest. This is a part of the developers' efforts to expand the series's appeal in the West; there's also a more rock-influenced soundtrack, and American-style cars have been added to the European-inspired machines and outlandish special vehicles synonymous with Ridge Racer.

Newcomers may also be enticed by a one-button drift option that swaps the series's regular controls for a Mario Kart feel. This can be toggled on or off; classic Ridge Racer controls, which are slightly more complicated, come standard. The rest of the controls are typical: gas and brake are mapped to two of the face buttons, and either the Control Pad or the handheld's new analog Circle Pad can be used to steer. The Circle



Curves Ahead

Reiko Nagase got her start as the Ridge Racer spokesmodel 14 years ago, but she doesn't appear to have aged a day. Fans of her stylish good looks and her love for cuddling up to cars will enjoy seeing Reiko's coy smiles in 3D during the sweet-looking CG movie that plays when the game boots up. And speaking of boots, boy, does she know how to put 'em on.


LAP
1/3
POS.
7th
INKY
STANDARD
5
214
km/h
TOTAL TIME
1'45"633
LAP TIME
1'45"633
-'--"---
-'--"---
MAP
POSITION
1 MEWKIES
2 NYAMCO
3 MAPPY
4 CLYDE
5 PINKY
6 INKY
7 namco
8 BLINKY
CAMERA MODE

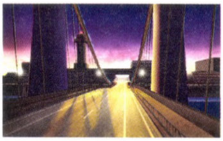
The bottom screen records your lap times, lists the position of your competitors, and displays your location on a course map that can be enlarged.

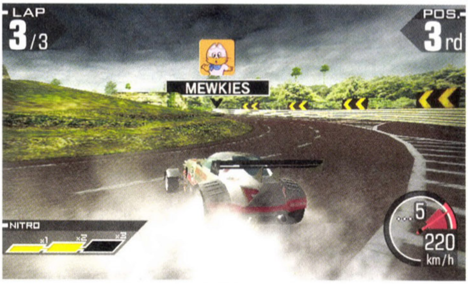
Pad works well, but for this Ridge Racer fan, nothing has ever topped the precision and stability afforded by tapping the Control Pad to nudge your car into the best racing line. The touch screen simply (but usefully) displays a course map.

A couple of the series's recent gameplay additions return, including slip-streaming—where you gain speed by sticking close to the car in front of you—and the ability to charge up to three nitro boosts by drifting (these can be triggered separately or together). Other enhancements—such as new nitro kits, faster acceleration off the starting line, or the ability to enter a race with a nitrous tank already full—can be purchased with points earned by racing in any of the game's modes. New cars can also be bought.

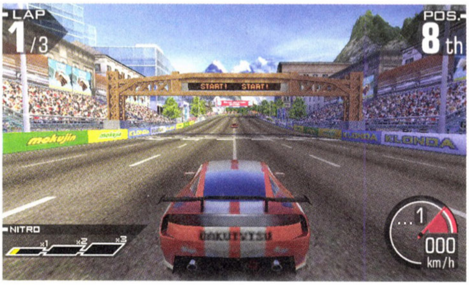
LAP
1/3
POS.
4th
PLAYER3
NITRO
6
320
km/h

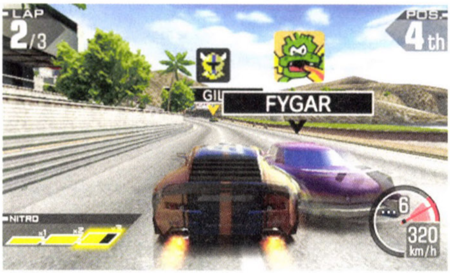
LAP
2/3
POS.
4th
KLONOA
NITRO
6
320
km/h

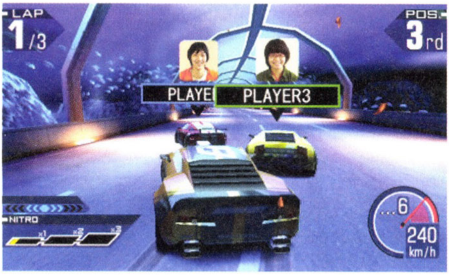


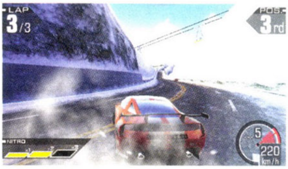


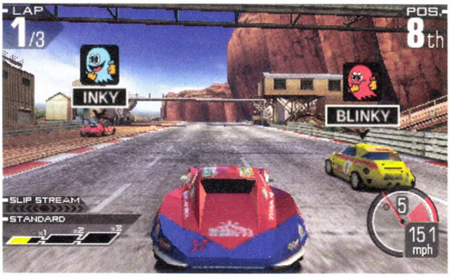
[Above] Squealing tires now smoke, which makes drifting feel more visceral. [Below] The game's new car and track designs sport an American-style feel.











LOADED WITH OPTIONS

In addition to Gran Prix and normal one-off races, the game features several modes. In Quick Tour the CPU will autoassemble a series of races based on your preferred style of driving—drifting or all-out speed—and how long you want the tour to last. A One-Make race has every competitor choose the same type of car for a true test of driving skill. There's also a Time Attack mode, and you can trade your best course times and ghost-car replays using the wireless Street Pass capability of the Nintendo 3DS. Just carry your system around in sleep mode, and when you pass by other Ridge Racer 3D players doing the same, you'll swap data wirelessly even if you left your game card at home. There is no support for online play, but up to four people can compete locally over a wireless connection. One cool little addition to multiplayer is the ability for players to display an icon of their choosing above their cars, so everyone will know who they're passing or smashing into. You can select your icon from a library of stock images, create a portrait of any Mii character saved to your system, or take a 2D photo of yourself or anything that strikes your fancy. Multiplayer also benefits from the game's overall shift toward more-aggressive play; you lose less speed than before when you bump into a car or a side rail, which allows for more visceral car-to-car battles. To underscore the intensified action, sparks and debris fly off your car during collisions, and your tires send out clouds of smoke as they squeal around a corner. The latter effect helps the cars look less floaty than before.

The 3D effects look good when you view all of the onscreen elements together, but this being a racing game, you're likely to lock your gaze on the horizon to watch the upcoming road, which causes you to miss much of the depth between the foreground and background. But when you have reason to focus on your car—especially if it's ramming into another vehicle—the effect is much more pronounced. In any case, we found that we missed the 3D visuals if we turned them off, even after we'd gotten over the initial wow factor.

BUILT TO LAST

Although we only got to try about a half-dozen races, we came away feeling confident that Namco Bandai has created another great Ridge Racer. The additions and changes made to the series seem to work without imposing themselves in a way that would prevent us from enjoying the series the way we used to. This isn't likely to be the showpiece game that you use to make everyone jealous of your Nintendo 3DS, but with top-class racing action and lots of compelling content, it might be the game that spends the most time in your shiny new system's card slot.

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Shadow Wars

Let's be honest: when it comes to graphics, Shadow Wars isn't exactly pushing the limits of the Nintendo 3DS hardware. But it is a new turn-based tactical game from Julian Gollop, who's responsible for some of the best examples of the genre (most famously, the beloved X-Com series for PC). The scenario is trademark Clancy, putting armchair generals in charge of an elite special-operations unit tasked with stopping a Russian ultranationalist from seizing power. You'll assemble your team from six unique classes, each with its own special abilities, and you'll unlock additional skills and equipment as you progress through the campaign. To gather some deeper intel, we went directly to Gollop. —STEVE T.

NINTENDO POWER: You've worked on turn-based tactical games for most of your career. What is it that draws you to this particular genre? And what do you feel is the key to making a great tactical game?

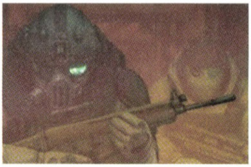
JULIAN GOLLOP: I have always been a fan of strategy games and war games—even before the advent of computers and consoles. I played many board games as a kid, and I still do, in fact. For me, a game works best when good decision-making is rewarded rather than quick reflexes. The key to making a great tactical/strategy game is for all of the decisions a player makes to be filled with importance, tension, and little uncertainty. A good AI will help with this, as will pacing the game properly. X-Com built up a lot of tension with its hidden movement system—not knowing exactly what is around the next corner. Shadow Wars takes a different approach, but the tension with each move builds up as you play through a mission.

How did you come to work on a Ghost Recon title? Was it your idea or something that Ubisoft came to you with?

I had been working as a game designer at Ubisoft for a year, working on the Chessmaster series. I wanted to make a new turn-based game, but the options were limited. No major publisher would normally touch the genre these days. However, I thought that linking a major franchise—such as Ghost Recon—to a turn-based game on the Nintendo DS might work. I pitched the idea to Ubisoft's editorial board, and they gave the project the go-ahead.

Although I pitched the idea for the DS, we switched to the Nintendo 3DS as soon as we heard about it. I thought that the game would be great for the [system] because our concept included 3D environments from the beginning. In fact, the player needs to use the 3D element of the terrain to his advantage, and having stereoscopic 3D helps the player assess the battlefield more easily and clearly. It looks fantastic, too.

Your most recent turn-based tactical game was Rebelstar: Tactical Command for the Game Boy Advance, and it seems like handheld platforms are becoming the de facto home for such titles. Why do you think that is? And do you change your approach at all when developing for a portable system?



Rebelstar was picked up by Namco thanks to previously successful turn-based games on the GBA. I think such games are popular on handhelds due to great quality efforts like Advance Wars and Fire Emblem. These games were incredibly deep, but worked really well on the GBA and the DS. They didn't require sophisticated graphics to deliver great gameplay. One mistake I made with Rebelstar was that the game was not really fluid and fast-paced enough. When designing for handhelds, you need to make sure the player can get a good gameplay session within 15 minutes or so, and then come back to the game later without having to worry about where the enemies were spotted and so on. Shadow Wars is a big improvement on Rebelstar in that respect, and players of Advance Wars and other handheld tactical games will feel right at home.

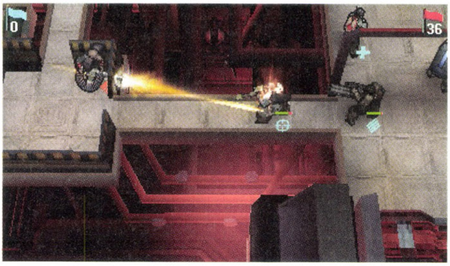
Will Shadow Wars offer any sort of online or local-wireless play? Will it take advantage of the StreetPass or SpotPass features of the Nintendo 3DS?

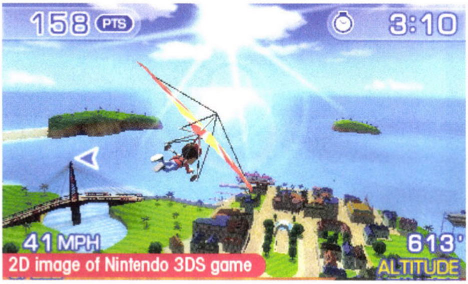
Sadly, no. Though StreetPass and SpotPass are fantastic features, we would have to delay release of the game to make proper use of them. I didn't want us to add something to the game just to say we used this or that feature. The emphasis of Shadow Wars is with the single-player experience. The game has tons of gameplay, with 37 distinctive Campaign missions that should take around 30 hours to complete, plus 20 Skirmish missions for another 15 hours of gameplay. We do have a great multiplayer mode where players can share the same Nintendo 3DS, and there are 10 missions specially created for this!

What's been your approach for taking advantage of the system's 3D functionality? What were some of the surprises and/or challenges you encountered developing for a 3D system?

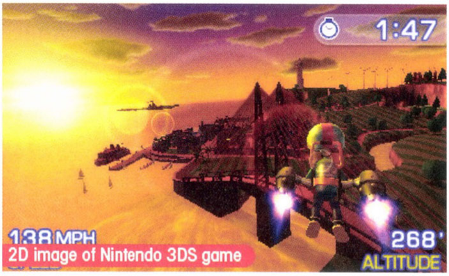
The Nintendo 3DS is undoubtedly a very cool system—the stereoscopic 3D works wonderfully. I was worried that we wouldn't have enough 3D effects. However, the game works very well because the overhead view really emphasizes the feeling of being in command of a battlefield. It is like looking through a little window on the world below. Another concern was that the interface elements would not work with the 3D very well, but it actually makes the game easier to play. The fact that you can really see depth makes it easier for the player to distinguish all of the elements in the scene, including interface elements. I am very pleased with the way it has turned out.

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT SOFIA
RELEASE: MARCH 2011

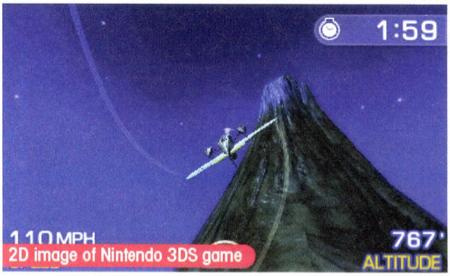




2D image of Nintendo 3DS game



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

Pilotwings Resort

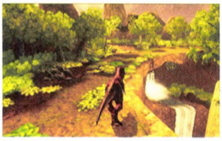
IF ANY GAME seems perfectly suited to the Nintendo 3DS, it's Pilotwings Resort, the third installment in Nintendo's venerable aerial series. By its very nature, flying makes more use of three dimensions than most activities, and since so much of the Pilotwings experience relies on judging distances (for passing through rings or making precision landings, for example), the 3D stereoscopic visuals definitely enhance the gameplay. In the game's Mission mode you'll fly around Wuhu Island (which you may remember from Wii Sports Resort) and tackle challenges in five difficulty levels using three types of vehicles: plane, hang glider, and rocket belt. Tasks range from using the plane to fly around the island to landing on a series of floating fuel pads with the rocket belt to taking photos of specific landmarks while hang gliding. (You can save your photos to an SD memory card.) If you don't feel like completing missions, you can simply soar around the island in Free Flight mode. —**CHRIS H.**

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO** RELEASE: **SPRING 2011**

Rayman 3D

RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE was one of the most influential and popular games of the Nintendo 64 generation. Ubisoft has taken the game's most highly regarded version (the one released on Sega's Dreamcast) and revamped it as a title for the launch window of the Nintendo 3DS. In addition to the 3D graphics, the new features of this version include better-tuned analog controls, a gentler difficulty curve, and a more intuitive camera system. —**CASEY L.**

PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT** DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT** RELEASE: **SPRING 2011**

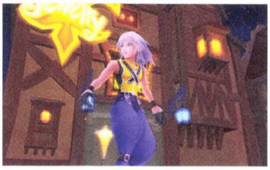


Combat of Giants: Dinosaurs 3D

IF YOU'VE EVER wanted to control a pink-and-purple stegosaurus that's covered in stars, Combat of Giants: Dinosaurs 3D is the game for you. Containing more than 20 types of customizable dinosaurs, this visually impressive game features exploration in addition to one-on-one battles. Once you've raised a champion from each of four dinosaur races, you'll pit them against the final boss, the vicious Arkosaurus. —**CHRIS H.**

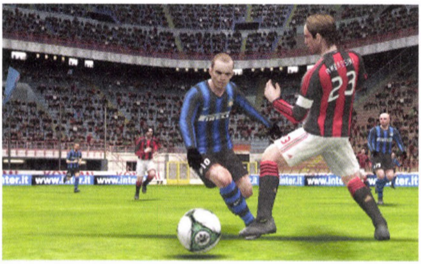
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT** DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT QUEBEC** RELEASE: **MARCH 2011**

Kingdom Hearts: Dream Drop Distance



The Kingdom Hearts Nintendo 3DS game teased at last year's E3 has been revealed as Dream Drop Distance, an original title that continues the stories of series heroes Sora and Riku after the events of Kingdom Hearts II and Re:coded. Players will control both characters, leaping between them as they proceed through two unique but intertwined quests. Creator Tetsuya Nomura promises several new Disney-themed locales and the most fast-paced action scenes in the franchise's history. —**CASEY L.**

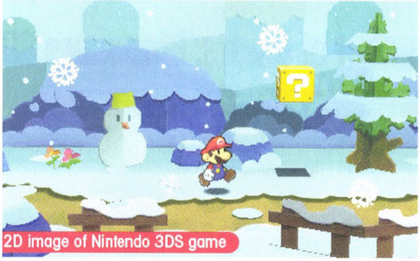
PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX RELEASE: TBA



Pro Evolution Soccer 2011 3D

Konami fires the first salvo in the inevitable 3DS soccer wars (between PES and FIFA, naturally), promising a 3D implementation that gives players a genuine sense of depth and distance on the pitch. —**PATRICK C.**

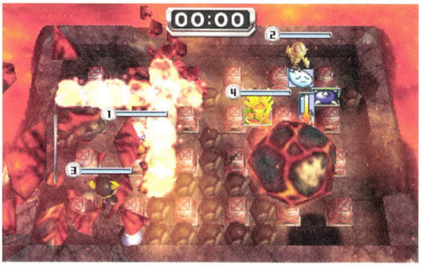
PUBLISHER: KONAMI DEVELOPER: WINNING ELEVEN PRODUCTIONS RELEASE: SPRING 2011



Paper Mario

The as-yet-untitled Nintendo 3DS version of Paper Mario takes place in a 3D world filled with 2D objects, including (naturally) Mario himself. The concept should be a perfect fit for the platform's striking 3D visuals. —**CASEY L.**

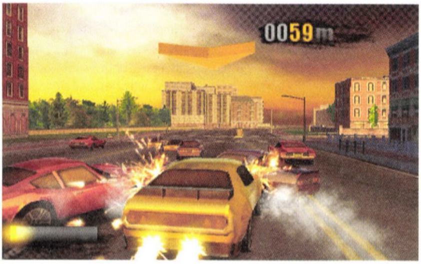
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO DEVELOPER: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS RELEASE: TBA



Bomberman

The first Nintendo 3DS entry in Hudson's venerable Bomberman franchise will offer a lengthy single-player adventure in addition to the usual competitive multiplayer modes. —**CASEY L.**

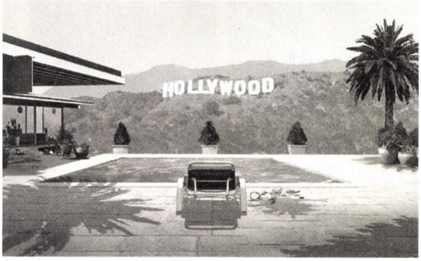
PUBLISHER: HUDSON DEVELOPER: HUDSON RELEASE: FALL 2011



Driver Renegade

Vigilante John Tanner has been given a free pass to commit vehicular manslaughter against the crime lords of New York City. The game features over 50 user-tunable cars with which to run down your foes. —**CASEY L.**

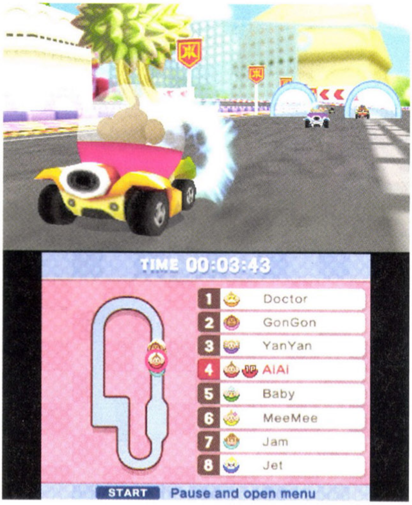
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT DEVELOPER: UBISOFT RELEASE: SPRING 2011



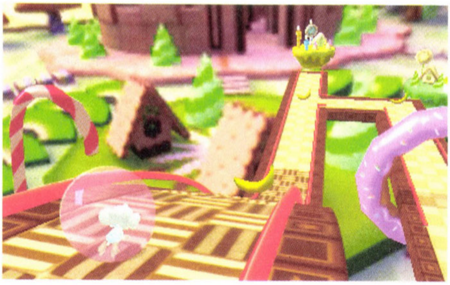
James Noir's Hollywood Crimes

Seemingly inspired by Professor Layton's unique blend of puzzles and adventure elements, James Noir serves up 140 different 3D puzzles over the course of a '60's Hollywood-themed murder mystery. —**CASEY L.**

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL RELEASE: SPRING 2011



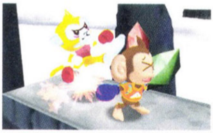
Super Monkey Ball 3D



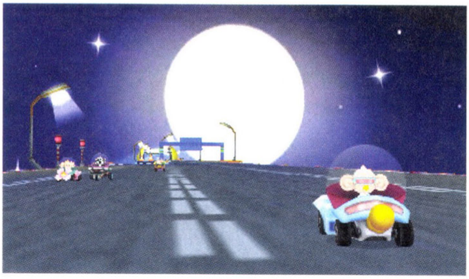
AFTER A DECADE of Super Monkey Ball titles, you probably know what to expect from the franchise's Nintendo 3DS debut, Super Monkey Ball 3D. You roll a ball-encased primate through hazard-filled stages (there are 80 in all this time around) to collect bananas and reach the goal—only this time it's in 3D. But this Nintendo 3DS title offers two ways to play the traditional Monkey Ball game type; you can either use the Circle Pad to get things rolling, or use the system's motion controls. Based on what we've played so far, we were comfortable with the former immediately, but the latter takes some getting used to—not to mention that you lose the 3D effect as you tilt the handheld away from you.

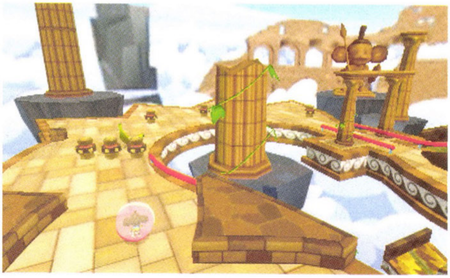
Monkey Ball is, however, only a third of what Super Monkey Ball 3D has to offer. Instead of complementing the classic Monkey Ball experience with minigames, this title features two other full games: Monkey Race and Monkey Fight. (Both are controlled via the Circle Pad and buttons, and both include the 3D visuals.) Monkey Race is a game in the style of Mario Kart wherein you select one of 16 characters and one of 16 cars, then hit the track, picking up and using power-ups as you vie for first place. Monkey Fight is a Super Smash Bros. kind of brawler in which your goal is to be the one with the most bananas when the timer runs out. Each of the four combatants starts off with the same number of bananas, and the fighters lose bananas—which you can then add to your own collection—whenever they are struck. Unlike the single-player-focused Monkey Ball, both Monkey Race and Monkey Fight are multiplayer-centric, supporting up to four players via local wireless.
—JUSTIN C.

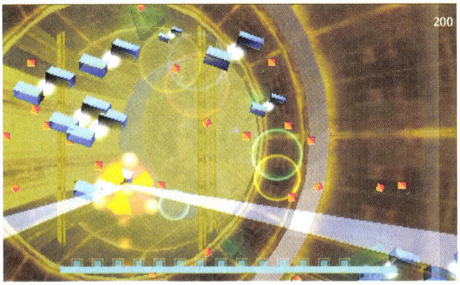
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
RELEASE: **SPRING 2011**

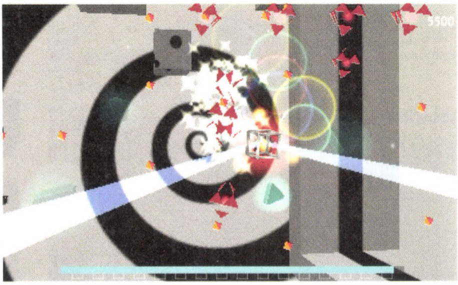


Fighting, racing, and rolling are all in a day's work for these simians.





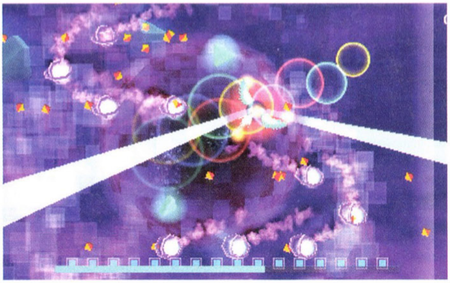




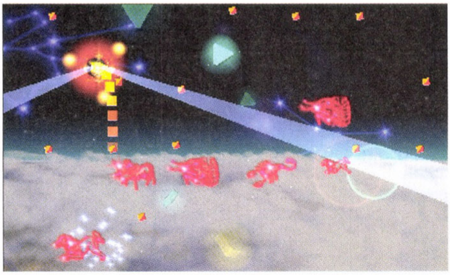
Dream Trigger 3D

THE NINTENDO 3DS isn't even out yet, and we're already seeing a pretty diverse lineup of software from developers. Checking the box for experimental, arcade-style shooter is Dream Trigger 3D. Due this spring, the project combines surreal, dreamlike settings with a dynamic soundtrack and a unique sonar mechanic. D3Publisher recently stopped by the NP offices to give us an exclusive first look at the game in action.

What initially appears to be a simple top-down shooter quickly reveals itself as a surprising test of dexterity akin to patting your head and rubbing your belly at the same time. When enemies enter the field of battle on the top screen, they're invisible. They appear as blips on the bottom screen, however, which serves as a sonar grid. You can place sonar bombs on the grid by tapping it with your stylus, and a beat bar sweeps across the grid in time with the music to activate the bombs as it makes contact. Any foes caught in an explosion will become visible on the top screen, allowing you to shoot them. All the while, you have an energy meter that fills as you reveal enemies and drains as you fire your weapon. The whole enterprise feels a bit unwieldy at first, but with practice you eventually get into a rhythm. Supporting that is a dynamic, multitrack musical score that adds layers as you destroy enemies, dodge incoming attacks, etc. In keeping with the game's trippy nature, all of the musical selections are remixes of famous classical works; you'll hear a hip-hop take on Wagner's "Flight of the Valkyries," for instance.

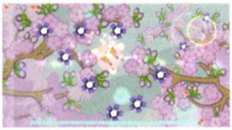


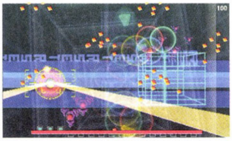
The look of your craft and of your enemies changes to match the theme of each stage. Below, malevolent zodiac signs attack against a starry sky.



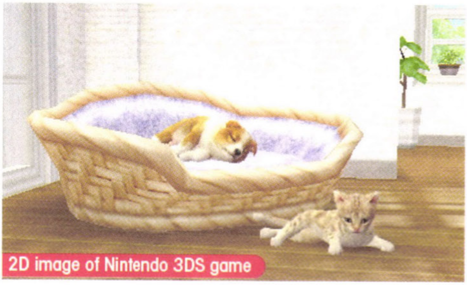
The game's 3D effect isn't quite as pronounced as we've seen in other Nintendo 3DS offerings, but it certainly adds to the dreamlike aesthetic. So do the diverse environments, which range from a storybook castle to something reminiscent of an M.C. Escher painting. The single-player campaign includes 50 levels in total, and a wireless Vs. mode lets you enjoy the psychedelic festivities with friends.

If you were to trace the lineage of Dream Trigger 3D, it would surely lead to stuff like Geometry Wars and Every Extend Extra (which Art Co. codeveloped with Q Entertainment). Hopefully it proves as wonderfully addictive as those two titles. —**STEVE T.**

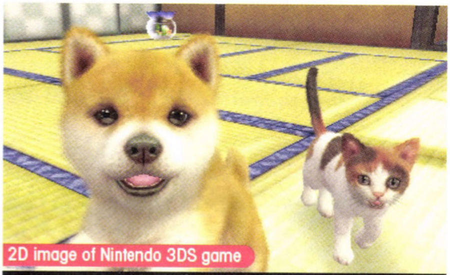




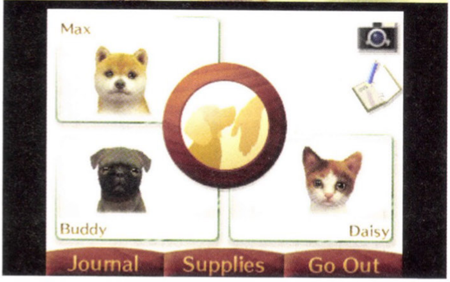
PUBLISHER: D3PUBLISHER
DEVELOPER: ART CO.
RELEASE: SPRING 2011



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

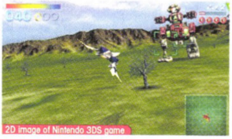


nintendogs + cats

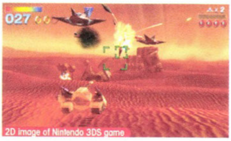
LIKE ITS DS PREDECESSOR, nintendogs + cats promises to make the most of the hardware it's presented on. Not only does the game feature voice recognition so you can call to your puppies and kittens, but now—thanks to the system's built-in camera—they'll respond to simply seeing your face. When your doggy spots you, it might jump toward the screen to attempt to lick your face, but it might be more stand-offish if a new user picks up the system. The game also allows other players' pets (and Mii characters) to visit via the hardware's StreetPass feature, while augmented-reality features will provide the illusion that your puppy is right there in the room with you. You can also snap in-game photos and share them with friends. There will be more than 20 breeds of dogs to choose from (including new types, such as a French bulldog); as with the original Nintendogs, the game will be available in multiple versions, each containing different breeds. Expect more variation between the individual animals of a given breed, along with plenty of activities to enjoy and numerous toys to play with (such as a boomerang, which really shows off the game's 3D effects). —**CHRIS H.**

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO DEVELOPER: NINTENDO RELEASE: SPRING 2011

Star Fox 64 3D



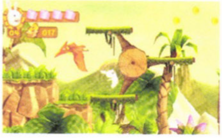
2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

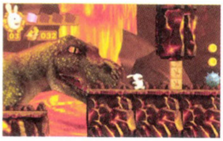


2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

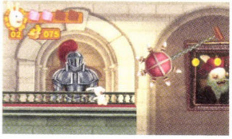
WHAT BETTER WAY to reintroduce Nintendo's classic space-shooter series than by bringing its very best entry into the modern age? Expect a complete graphical overhaul with a much better frame rate than the Nintendo 64 original's, added 3D effects that provide a clearer impression of distance and position, and two new modes: Score Attack, which challenges you to set new records in every stage, and four-person multiplayer (local wireless only) that includes new power-ups and weapons. And let me tell you, flying the Arwing feels great with the new Circle Pad. —**CHRIS S.**

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO DEVELOPER: NINTENDO RELEASE: 2011





Rabbids Travel in Time

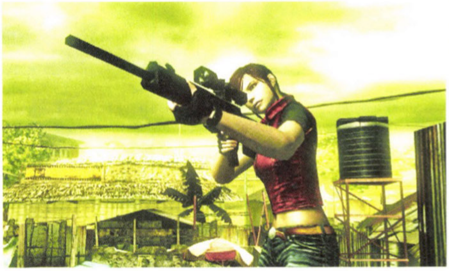


ALTHOUGH UBISOFT'S Nintendo 3DS lineup is heavy on ports masquerading as original titles, Rabbids Travel in Time is—bizarrely—*not* a port of the Wii game with the same title. While the two share a basic storyline, Rabbids Travel in Time 3D is not a minigame collection, but a completely original side-scrolling platformer in the style of Yoshi's Island. The adventure spawns over 60 levels from four historical epochs, including the prehistoric era and ancient Egypt. —**CASEY L.**

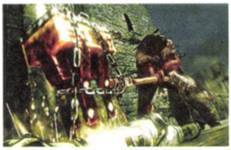
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT DEVELOPER: UBISOFT CASABLANCA RELEASE: SPRING 2011

Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D

Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D strips the Resident Evil experience down to its essentials: it's just you (and perhaps a local or online partner)—armed with a few weapons and a limited supply of ammo—against the unrelenting legions of the infected undead. Choosing from a wide variety of Resident Evil characters, you'll attempt to defeat as many enemies as possible before time runs out or you meet a gruesome demise. (This is an M-rated series, after all.) Though the game is primarily based on modes included in Resident Evil 4 and 5 (all the environments are borrowed from those titles), the Nintendo 3DS version offers several upgrades, including new character- and weapon-customization options, an enhanced touch-screen inventory system, new characters, and—for the first time in a third-person Resident Evil game—the ability to shoot while you run. To find out more about Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D, we recently spoke to the game's product manager, Ryan McDougall. —**CHRIS H.**



[Below] If you look closely, you'll see Chris Redfield smashed beneath that massive hammer. Poor little fella.



NINTENDO POWER Why does Capcom want to bring Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D to Nintendo 3DS as a standalone product?

RYAN MCDOUGALL What Resident Evil has always been about is the core gameplay experience of overwhelming odds against vulnerable—not invincible—protagonists. And that is what this game is. That's what Resident Evil has always been and that's what this game is. So to us, bringing it to the Nintendo 3DS and keeping it light makes perfect sense.

What do you think the 3D adds to the experience?

A lot. For starters it's pretty, but that's the assumption. On top of that, when we're talking about immersion—3D plays right into that. In a survival-horror game, you're always going to have that feeling of "What's behind me? Am I in danger? How much danger? I saw that enemy earlier; where did they go?" That feeling is really intensified with the 3D.

Why did Capcom decide to add to this version the ability to shoot while running?

The idea is that it's new gameplay tactics, new gameplay ideas. It's going to allow you to do things you couldn't do before. What everyone thinks about is the ability to move forward and shoot at the same time. But this is Resident Evil—you're going to be running *backwards* and shooting. That's what it's about—running away—and that's core to the emotions that are locked to getting out of this. It's that idea that I'm in danger, I gotta get back, I gotta get out of here, and that's what it allows you to do. It brings something fresh and unique, especially for the Nintendo 3DS.

Are there new maps as well?

What we're doing is taking Resident Evil 4 and Resident Evil 5 maps as a starting point and then remixing them. So weapons, items, and enemies are all going to be in different places, there's going to be tweaks and twists to the exact layout, but people are going to recognize that this is the village from Resident Evil 4, [or] this is the landing zone from Resident Evil 5. It's going to be familiar settings.

Do you think there will be any more obscure legacy characters like Hunk?

That's sort of the joy of Resident Evil: The Mercenaries. We have this huge expansive universe in Resident Evil and get to pull whatever we want from it. That's why we can play Hunk and Claire next to each other. Or Hunk and Chris Redfield, who have never been in a game together. Playing them together is the point—it's fresh and unique, and it's a celebration of everything everyone loves about the whole franchise.

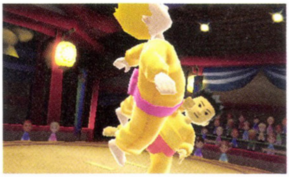
I'd like to suggest that you be able to play as just Barry Burton's beard.

[Laughs] Wouldn't that be overpowered? I mean, we gotta balance the game for online.

Speaking of which, what will the online be like?

It's two-player online co-op, but what we're proud of is the ability to do that globally. So anywhere in the world, [online] co-op, just like the console experience. We're taking everything that was in the console experience and expanding on it—that's down to things like the co-op play online.

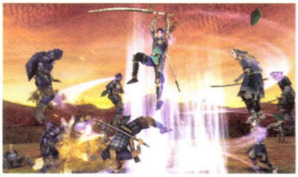
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
RELEASE: SUMMER 2011



Deca Sports Extreme

Deca Sports Extreme may well cover casual-sports fare in one deft stroke, offering 10 sports, from soccer to sumo wrestling. Power-up-fueled special moves, multiplayer, and team customization round out the package. —**PATRICK C.**

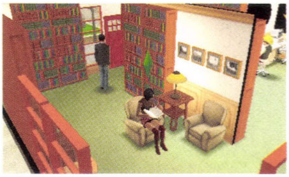
PUBLISHER HUDSON
DEVELOPER: HUDSON
RELEASE: SUMMER 2011



Samurai Warriors Chronicles

In this tactically-focused installment of the long-running hack-and-slash series, players can take solo control of a squad of four warriors or split command duties with co-op partners. —**CASEY L.**

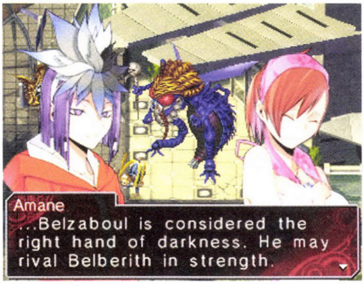
PUBLISHER: TECMO KOEI
DEVELOPER: OMEGA FORCE
RELEASE: TBA



The Sims 3

In addition to the obligatory rejiggering for 3D, EA promises a full-featured Sims experience, including the ability to create Sims from camera photos, trade Sims with friends, and build homes across multiple zones. —**PATRICK C.**

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: THE SIMS STUDIO
RELEASE: SPRING 2011



Amane
...Belzaboul is considered the right hand of darkness. He may rival Belberith in strength.

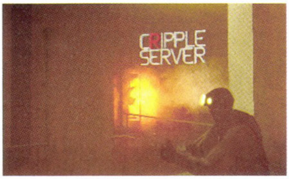
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor Overclocked

Atlus's first Nintendo 3DS release is a new version of the DS cult hit Devil Survivor, a tactical role-playing game set in a quarantined and demon-infested Tokyo. The graphics in this version have been remastered, the dialogue is now fully voiced, and the game concludes with an eighth chapter that was not included in the original release. But don't expect a lot of high-impact 3D; the game is played primarily on the 2D touch screen. —**CASEY L.**

PUBLISHER: ATLUS DEVELOPER: ATLUS
RELEASE: SUMMER 2011

Kaido
Heh... This is a helluva catch. I bet there's a gold mine of Macca to be had.

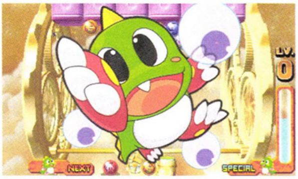
Yuzu
Aaaah! Wh-What is this!?



Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3D

Sam Fischer's first Nintendo 3DS adventure appears to be a remake of Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory, with 3D visuals, a new lock-picking minigame, and touch-screen menus that provide easy access to Sam's arsenal. —**CASEY L.**

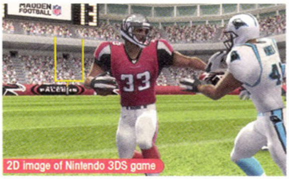
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL
RELEASE: SPRING 2011



Bust-A-Move Universe

The Bust-a-Move series moves to the Nintendo 3DS in precisely the way it should: it's pretty much the same game we've known and loved since 1994, updated with 3D effects. —**PATRICK C.**

PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER: TAITO
RELEASE: SPRING 2011



2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

Madden NFL Football

As expected, EA has optimized Madden for 3D. Highlights include multiple play-calling modes, an action-oriented 5-on-5 mode, and a Spotlight Moments mechanic that intensifies the drama of critical moves. —**PATRICK C.**

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA NORTH CAROLINA
RELEASE: SPRING 2011

LETHAL

Team Ninja's comely combatants get the 3D treatment in Dead or Alive Dimensions.

BEAUTY

BY **STEVE THOMASON**

PUBLISHER: **TECMO KOEI** DEVELOPER: **TEAM NINJA** RELEASE: **MARCH 2011**

If you've never played a Dead or Alive game before, your perception of the series may revolve around its penchant for suggestively clad female brawlers with exaggerated... bounce. But DOA is more than just a source of physics-infused titillation; it's also a damn fine fighting franchise. Nintendo 3DS owners will have the opportunity to discover that for themselves when Dead or Alive Dimensions hits the handheld at launch.

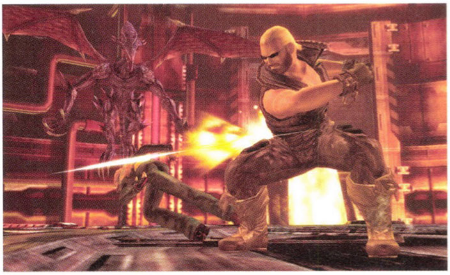
A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

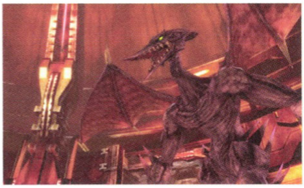
Described by producer Yosuke Hayashi as a "greatest hits" version of the series, Dimensions brings together characters and environments from all of the previous installments while also introducing quite a bit of new content. The core gameplay style remains as it's always been, and though the fisticuffs may not be as deep as Virtua Fighter's or as flashy as Street Fighter's, DOA has a certain crispness and fluidity that puts it in the same class as those acclaimed competitors.

Dimensions carries on another franchise tradition with its smooth, responsive controls. That's especially true when using the analog Circle Pad, which, by the way, is fast becoming one of our favorite aspects of Nintendo's new handheld. Nonetheless, the game also gives you the option to use the old-fashioned Control Pad or a new touch-screen interface. The latter displays a move list on the bottom screen that continually changes based on the conditions of the bout. Simply tapping one of the moves will cause your fighter to execute it automatically. This particular control scheme is obviously intended to make the game more accessible for casual players, but it also comes in handy for those who would never even consider resorting to the stylus. The button commands are listed alongside each move and combo, providing an ever-present reference so you don't have to memorize everything or constantly access the pause menu.

For a launch title, Dimensions is a remarkably robust package. The main,

[Below] Many of the beautiful vistas from previous DOA games return, but the big news is the inclusion of a new Metroid-themed stage.





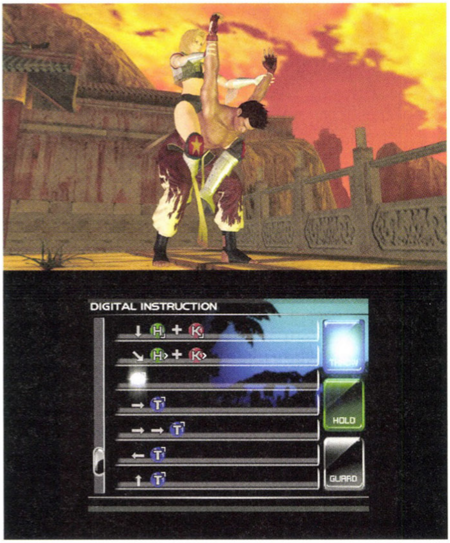
single-player story mode is called Chronicle and spans all of the major events from the previous games while filling in certain gaps for the first time. To drive the narrative forward, your characters are predetermined. Chapter one starts you with Kasumi, for instance, but you'll take control of several different combatants over the course of the story. All-new, real-time cut-scenes are sprinkled liberally throughout and look mighty impressive, as does the rest of the game. The character models really showcase the polygon-pushing power of the hardware—especially with their expressive faces during cinematics—and the animation is silky-smooth. Further boosting the visual impact is some of the most effective 3D we've seen on the system. It gives the beautiful environments a real sense of depth, as if the locales were extending beyond the screen. Tecmo Koei isn't skimping on the production values, either; all of the cut-scenes are fully voiced, and you'll even have the option to choose between the original Japanese recordings (with subtitles) and an English dub. To help you keep track of how the saga all fits together, the bottom screen will occasionally offer brief historical notes on the topic being discussed (similar to the hyperlinks in Golden Sun: Dark Dawn).

NEW AND IMPROVED

Despite the "greatest hits" approach, long-time DOA fans will notice quite a few changes right out of the gate. The game's 25-character roster is the largest in the series to date, and includes bosses from the previous games that have never been playable before (see the "Deadheads" sidebar). A number of fighters have added new moves to their repertoires, as well, and all of the characters have undergone some adjustments and rebalancing.

Likewise, Team Ninja has assembled and tweaked approximately 15 of the most popular stages from throughout the series. That's in addition to a pair of all-new locales. The first is a cruise ship called *Freedom Survivor*, which plays a central role in Chronicle mode. Like many of the environments, it consists of multiple levels; you can start a fight on the ship's upper deck then knock your opponent off the edge, through a glass skylight, and into the lavish ballroom below. The other new stage brings a little Nintendo flavor to the mix, reminiscent of Link's cameo in Soul Calibur II. It's inspired by Metroid: Other M and features an appearance by Ridley as an environmental hazard. The giant space pirate circles the stage launching fireballs at the combatants, and should one of them fall of the edge, he'll finish off the unfortunate soul in spectacular fashion. The stage also offers the opportunity to call on Samus for a helping hand (or, more accurately, a helping bomb), but details on that must remain secret for now.

Of course, any fighting game worth its salt needs a great multiplayer component, and in that regard Dimensions looks poised to deliver. It offers one-on-one brawls via both local wireless and online play, as well as a Tag Challenge mode (local wireless only) in



which you and a partner can team up against computer-controlled opponents. As the two of you tag in and out, you can perform special double-team moves that are specific to certain character pairings. Such attacks typically deal quite a bit of damage—encouraging teamwork—and they look cool, to boot.

Additionally, Dimensions will take advantage of the Nintendo 3DS StreetPass feature with something called Throwdown mode. As you play any of the single- or multiplayer modes, the game keeps track of your tendencies and creates an avatar that reflects your fighting style. Whenever you pass by another player, your systems will download each other's avatars, which you can then battle. Think of it sort of like the "ghost data" in a racing game; you're not competing directly against that player, but you are duking it out with an AI derived from his unique behaviors. The game will also use SpotPass to download updates, including new fighter profiles for Throwdown mode. (Tecmo Koei hints that players may even be able to take on avatars from members of Team Ninja.) Whether those updates might bring other types of new content remains under wraps.

In the meantime, Dimensions will offer dedicated players the opportunity to unlock all sorts of hidden bonuses, such as alternate costumes and more than 1,000 figurines. You'll earn these by accomplishing certain tasks in the game—finishing a chapter in Chronicle mode or winning a Throwdown match, for instance—but you can also purchase many of the bonuses via the system's Game Coins. Either way, there are plenty of reasons to keep playing even after the luster of 3D jiggling has worn off.

DEAD ☠ HEADS

Here's the complete roster of playable characters in Dead or Alive Dimensions. Only 20 of them are available from the get-go, however; those marked with an asterisk must be unlocked.

Kasumi
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Ayane
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Hitomi
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 3

Lei Fang
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Kokoro
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 4

Tina Armstrong
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Helena Douglas
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 2

Christie
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 3

Ryu Hayabusa
First appearance:
Ninja Gaiden

Hayate
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 3

Ein
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 2

Jann Lee
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Zack
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Gen Fu
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Bayman
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Bass Armstrong
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Leon
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 2

Brad Wong
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 3

Eliot
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 4

Lisa
First appearance:
Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball

Raidou*
First appearance:
Dead or Alive

Kasumi Alpha*
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 2

Alpha-152*
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 4

Tengu*
First appearance:
Dead or Alive 2

Genra*
First appearance:
Dead or Alive Ultimate

FIGHT PROMOTER

In 2008, Yosuke Hayashi took over as the head of Team Ninja following the departure of his outspoken predecessor, Tomonobu Itagaki. Dimensions marks the first Dead or Alive title that Hayashi has led, but his resume is plenty impressive. Most recently, he produced and directed Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword and codirected Metroid: Other M. Taking a break from the final development stages of Dimensions, he chats with us about the challenges of 3D, why the third DOA is his favorite, and dueling Ryus.

NINTENDO POWER How did you go about choosing which characters would appear in the game?

YOSUKE HAYASHI We included all of the characters that we considered to be essential parts of the Dead or Alive series's history. That includes several characters who have been a part of the Dead or Alive world but haven't actually shown up in the games yet. As for new *playable* characters, there are some who have appeared in previous games but are now playable for the first time. Naturally, this game has the largest selection of playable characters of any Dead or Alive game yet.

What's been your approach for taking advantage of the system's 3D functionality? What were some of the surprises and/or challenges you encountered developing for a 3D system?

There were two major challenges. The first was trying to capture that sensation of things "jumping out" at you. This was the first time we've worked with stereoscopic 3D, so that was quite a challenge. The other was doing the 3D in a way that wouldn't tire out players' eyes. We needed to make a game that players could really get into and play for long periods of time. So we put a lot of work into making sure that players could enjoy the 3D without becoming fatigued by it.

If we're not mistaken, this is the first DOA fighting game to appear on a handheld. Has that altered the team's thinking at all, or are you going at it just as you would with a console game?

Actually, both. We hadn't made a Dead or Alive game in a while, so we wanted to make sure that we came back with enough quality and volume of content to make up for our long absence. That would have been just as true if we were developing for a console instead of a handheld.

On the other hand, we put a lot of thought into the different ways people use handheld game systems. We felt that handhelds lend themselves to a much wider range of play styles than consoles do—there are people who want to fully immerse themselves into a game, people who want a casual pick-up-and-play experience, and people who want to be able to enjoy a game in brief spurts. We wanted to make a game that could fit as many of these play styles as possible.

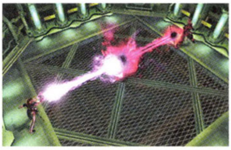
For example, we implemented a variable frame rate into the game so that it would run at 30 frames per second with the 3D effect on, and 60 frames per second with it off. We felt that this would allow players to appreciate the beauty of the game's visuals, while also satisfying hardcore fans who want to experience it as a serious competitive fighting game.

This is also your first time heading up the development of a fighter, is it not? How has the experience differed from directing an action game, and what do you feel is the key to making a great fighting game?

There is no major difference when it comes to the core of what we're doing: making a good game. You set the game's concept and direction, and engage in a constant process of reconsidering it, refining it, and making incremental improvements. The fundamentals of game development are always the same.

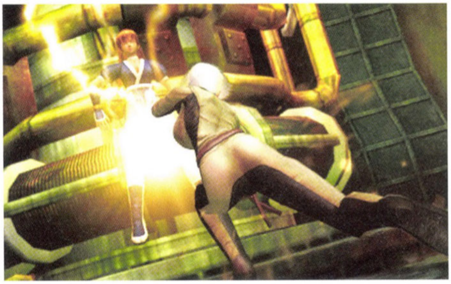
The biggest difference with fighting games is that the opponent is just like the player: a human being. So you have to look beyond the victor, and also consider, "I wonder how the losing player will feel about this?" This is a big change from making action games, where the only opponent is the computer AI. Designing a game while considering the experience of both players was a very new and stimulating experience for me.

Is the development team for Dimensions mostly composed of Dead Or Alive veterans, newcom-



[Below] The real-time cut-scenes look fantastic in 3D. Here, Bass and Zack reminisce about their tag team match against DDP and Karl Malone.

[Below] Environmental hazards have always been a hallmark of the Dead or Alive series and add a little extra strategy to the fisticuffs.



ers, or a mix of the two?
The core members of the development team are Dead or Alive veterans. There were also some new staff members on the team, who were able to contribute some valuable ideas due to their fresh perspective on the series. As a result, I think the game reflects both an enduring love for the Dead or Alive series and a spirit of tackling new challenges.

Do you have a favorite Dead or Alive title that you've looked to for inspiration while developing Dimensions?
I love the entire series, but Dead or Alive 3 was the first game that I worked on as a developer, so it holds a special place in my heart. I still remember how moved I was the first time I saw that box on a game-store shelf. I imagine that all game developers feel the same way about the first game they worked on. I held onto that sense of pride throughout the development of Dead or Alive Dimensions.

Who's your favorite character in the Dead or Alive universe?
I don't want the other characters to feel spurned, so I'm going to keep that one a secret!

Why did you choose Dead or Alive for your first Nintendo 3DS project rather than, say, a new Ninja Gaiden?
We chose Dead or Alive because we felt that the fighting genre would be a good fit for a portable system. We made Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword for the DS, and were able to make a stylus-controlled action game that was so hardcore it was a challenge even for me. My one regret about that game was that it was simply too hardcore. I feel that we should have added more features to make it enjoyable for casual users. If we were to make a Ninja Gaiden game for the Nintendo 3DS, I'd want the game design to take into consideration that variety of play styles that we talked about earlier.

What do you think of the Nintendo 3DS hardware in terms of horsepower?
It's a portable platform that has enough power to feel like an actual game console. It also feels very well balanced. There are a lot of different features that developers can concentrate on, so I'm excited by the prospect that every game will be able to showcase a completely different facet of the platform.

Finally, there's another high-profile fighting game coming out at the launch of the Nintendo 3DS. Care to engage in a little friendly trash talk and tell our readers why they should buy Dead or Alive instead of that game?
That "other" game is a *2D* fighting game. Even on the Nintendo 3DS, the characters can't break free of the straight line on which they fight each other. Dead or Alive Dimensions, on the other hand, is a genuine 3D fighter in which you can move freely throughout the game's stages. Surely that makes us the champion of the 3D fighting games!

Now that I think about it, both games feature a character named Ryu. If we ever have the chance, I would love to see a crossover fight between those two!

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RED STEEL 2
FINALLY, wielding a sword in a Wii game feels as real as you'd always dreamed!
Wii
RESIDENT EVIL RETURNS TO Wii
BOOM BLOX: BASH PARTY
DEFENDING THE TITLE
AGENTS of CHANGE

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THE 2010 NINTENDO POWER AWARDS

What if summer blockbusters came out all year 'round? Nintendo systems experienced the video game equivalent of that dreamy scenario last year. From the spring through the coldest days of winter, the Wii and Nintendo DS systems received the most epic lineup of games in their history. From ambitious originals to highly anticipated megasequels, we played them all and enjoyed every second. Only a select few could be deemed the year's best, though. These are those games.

BY THE NINTENDO POWER STAFF

WII GAME OF THE YEAR

Super Mario Galaxy 2

Sequels rarely surpass the original, but if there's any game franchise where lightning can strike twice—and has, in fact, struck many, many more times than that—it's Mario. Nintendo's mascot returned for a second gravity-defying trek through a galaxy of fantastic sights, sounds, and challenges that brought smile after smile to our faces as we discovered the next neat new trick its designers had come up with since the first game. This is as close to platforming perfection as it gets.

THE NOMINEES: Donkey Kong Country Returns, Kirby's Epic Yarn, Metroid Other M, NBA Jam, Sonic Colors, Super Mario Galaxy 2

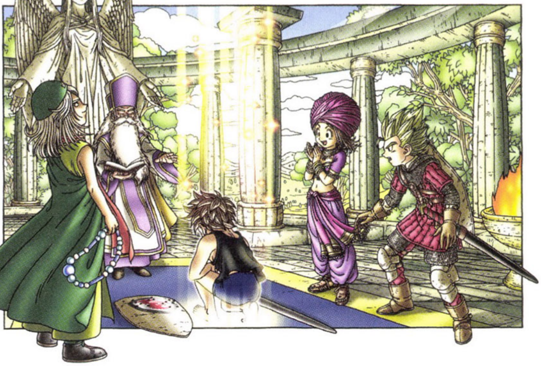
NINTENDO DS GAME OF THE YEAR

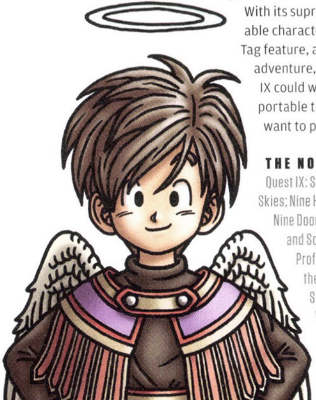
Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies

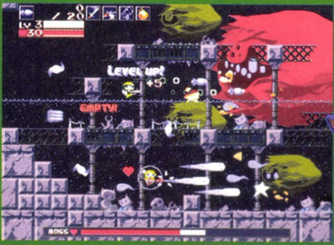
The Dragon Quest series of RPGs has reigned supreme in Japan for decades, and its ninth installment leaves little question as to why; it's an epic love letter to the genre, combining old-school gameplay with new-school ideas. With its supremely customizable characters, ingenious Tag feature, and 100-hour-plus adventure, Dragon Quest IX could work only as a portable title—you never want to put it down.

THE NOMINEES: Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies; Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors; Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions; Professor Layton and the Unwound Future; Super Scribblenauts; WarioWare D.I.Y.

2
es 23 poin of damage to Leviathan.
NintyPov Lv 13 HP 76 MP 25
Fight
Examine
Flee
Misc.
Mythos Lv 12 HP 53 MP 55 Follow Orders
Spark Lv 12 HP 73 MP 20 Follow Orders
Echo Lv 6 HP 22 MP 30 Follow Orders







WiiWARE GAME OF THE YEAR

Cave Story

Originally conceived for Japanese personal computers more than five years ago as a tribute to action-exploration games like Metroid, Cave Story is a labor of love by a designer raised on NES games. Every aspect of it—the sprites, the music, the sound, the levels—is crafted with such care that it's impossible not to feel a warm and fuzzy wave of nostalgia as you're sucked into this grand adventure.

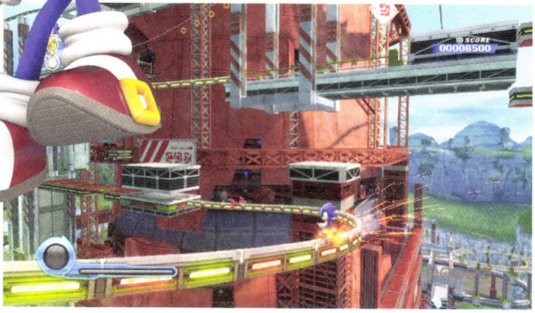
THE NOMINEES: And Yet It Moves, Blaster Master Overdrive, Cave Story, Fluidity, Mega Man 10, Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1

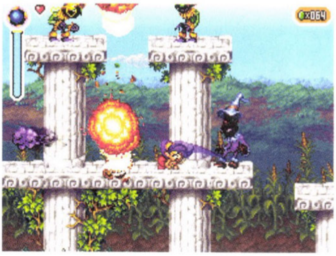
BEST Wii GRAPHICS

Sonic Colors

Nintendo president Satoru Iwata once said that when you see the graphics Wii is capable of, "you will say 'wow.'" That actually happened when we were playing Sonic Colors. Even though Sonic is synonymous with speed, you may very well want to stop the action just to take in the game's sweeping landscapes and excellent art direction.

THE NOMINEES: Donkey Kong Country Returns, GoldenEye 007, Kirby's Epic Yarn, Monster Hunter Tri, Sonic Colors, Super Mario Galaxy 2





DSiWARE GAME OF THE YEAR

Shantae: Risky's Revenge

Years in the making, the long-awaited sequel to Shantae finally arrived on DSiWare—and did it ever deliver. Featuring a mix of action and exploration reminiscent of Metroid, along with great visuals and a wry sense of humor, the game exudes a level of polish that most DSiWare games don't come close to achieving. This game is a must-have.

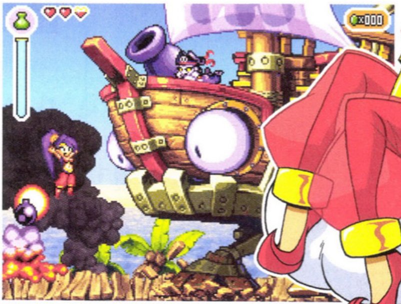
THE NOMINEES: Cave Story, Chronos Twins, Dark Void Zero, Divergent Shift, Photo Dojo, Shantae: Risky's Revenge

BEST NINTENDO DS GRAPHICS

Shantae: Risky's Revenge

How do the guys at WayForward do it? Despite the limitations of developing a downloadable game, they managed to make a product that looks better than anything else out there. As immersive as fully realized polygonal worlds can be, sometimes nothing looks better than a lovingly hand-animated 2D title.

THE NOMINEES: Dementium II, Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies, Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light, Golden Sun: Dark Dawn, Shantae: Risky's Revenge, Sonic Colors



BEST SOUND/VOICE ACTING

GoldenEye 007

If you want your first-person shooter to be the equivalent of a 200-million-dollar blockbuster action flick, it'd better sound the part—and GoldenEye 007 certainly does. The voice acting is first class, outdone only by the sound design. The rattle of machine-gun fire and the resulting rain of shell casings has never been more impactful in a Wii game.

THE NOMINEES: Call of Duty: Black Ops (Wii), Epic Mickey (Wii), GoldenEye 007 (Wii), Guilty Party (Wii), NBA Jam (Wii), Professor Layton and the Unwound Future (DS)

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

Super Mario Galaxy 2

Koji Kondo and his team have scored countless Nintendo games—including the very first Super Mario Bros.—but their work on Super Mario Galaxy 2 is among their very best. The diverse tunes perfectly capture the magical feel of each unique galaxy, drawing you in with the sweeping orchestral majesty of the title screen and keeping you rapt through the fittingly epic final boss battle.

THE NOMINEES: Arc Rise Fantasia (Wii), Donkey Kong Country Returns (Wii), Epic Mickey (Wii), Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light (DS), Sonic Colors (Wii), Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii)

BEST ADVENTURE GAME

Cave Story

Other adventure games may have had bigger budgets or more-recognizable heroes, but Cave Story won us over with its flawless mix of exploration and action. The game perfectly balances guided gameplay with self-discovery as you travel through a nonlinear world and learn about its surprisingly deep mythos, and the result is incredibly satisfying.

THE NOMINEES: Cave Story (Wii), Epic Mickey (Wii), Metroid: Other M (Wii), Monster Hunter Tri (Wii), Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors (DS), Shantae: Risky's Revenge (DS)

BEST SHOOTER

GoldenEye 007

Taking us back over a decade to the dawn of the modern console first-person shooter, GoldenEye 007 is just about as perfect a reimagining of Rare's N64 classic as we could ask for. From the never-let-up, white-knuckle campaign with its superb control and surprises around every turn to the top-notch multiplayer, this is the genre at its best.

THE NOMINEES: Bit.Trip Fate (Wii), Call of Duty: Black Ops (Wii), GoldenEye 007 (Wii), Red Steel 2 (Wii)

BEST MUSIC/RHYTHM GAME

Rock Band 3

331,098
E5
D5

The king of music games retained its throne for the third year running—largely because creator Harmonix didn't rest on its laurels. Rock Band 3 introduced a ground-up revamp featuring a keyboard—the biggest addition to the series since its debut—not to mention its most diverse selection of tracks to date.

THE NOMINEES: Beat City (DS), DJ Hero 2 (Wii), Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock (Wii), Michael Jackson: The Experience (DS), Rock Band 3 (Wii)

BEST ACTION GAME

Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars

Precise yet flashy, instantly gratifying yet full of technique, Tatsunoku vs. Capcom is a brilliant and furiously explosive tag-team fighting game. When you've got characters from series as diverse as Mega Man, Dead Rising, and *Battle of the Planets* dishing out millions of points of damage per combo, how can you go wrong?

THE NOMINEES: Chronos Twins (DS), Dark Void Zero (DS), Mega Man 10 (Wii), No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle (Wii), Sin and Punishment: Star Successor (Wii), Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars (Wii)

BEST ROLE-PLAYING/STRATEGY GAME

NintyPow
Lv 14
HP 84
MP 29
Attack
Spells
Defend
Abilities
Items
Coup de Grâce
Mythos
Lv 13
HP 63
MP 69
Follow Orders
Spark
Lv 13
HP 83
MP 21
Follow Orders
Echo
Lv 10
HP 56
MP 42
Follow Orders

Dragon Quest IX

RPGs are meant to take you on fantastic adventures, and there was no grander expedition released in 2010 than this installment in the legendary Dragon Quest series. The gameplay possesses a classic flair, but it's the seemingly unending array of quests available—both solo and with friends—that makes this game so very hard to put down.

THE NOMINEES: Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies (DS), Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City (DS), Golden Sun: Dark Dawn (DS), Infinite Space (DS), Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions (DS), Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey (DS)

BOSH
WADE
MIA 38
0:19
3RD QTR
CHI 36
BOOZER
18
BULLS
CHICAGO

BEST SPORTS GAME

NBA Jam

The greatest sports games aren't the ones with the most up-to-date stats or the largest rosters; they're the ones that are the most fun to play with (and against) your friends. That being the case, NBA Jam represents one of the greatest achievements in the genre.

THE NOMINEES: FIFA Soccer 11 (Wii), Madden NFL 11 (Wii), NBA Jam (Wii), Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11 (Wii)

BEST PLATFORMER

Super Mario Galaxy 2

Mario rides a giant drill, creates cloud platforms, turns into a rolling boulder, and much more in Super Mario Galaxy 2—and all of these new mechanics are built into some of the cleverest levels you've ever explored in a platformer. There's something fresh and new around every bend, and it's that boundless creativity and buckets of polish that make Mario's second Wii outing truly great.

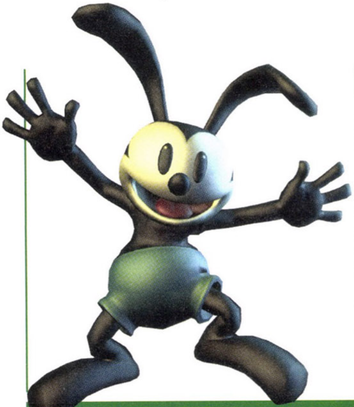
THE NOMINEES: Donkey Kong Country Returns (Wii), Kirby's Epic Yarn (Wii), Sonic Colors (Wii), Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1 (Wii), Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii)

BEST MULTIPLAYER

Rock Band 3

It's Rock *Band*, not Rock Duo or Rock Trio—and Rock Band 3 finally delivered the full band experience to Wii with not only the addition of a new instrument (the keyboard), but also three-part vocal harmony. That means room for seven players, and one of the best excuses we can think of to throw a party.

THE NOMINEES: DJ Hero 2 (Wii), GoldenEye 007 (Wii), Monster Hunter Tri (Wii), NBA Jam (Wii), Rock Band 3 (Wii), Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars (Wii)



BEST NEW CHARACTER

Oswald—Epic Mickey

This year's standout from the game-character freshman class actually isn't new at all. Oswald the Lucky Rabbit was one of Walt Disney's earliest creations—he was just sort of forgotten in the shadow of Mickey Mouse. 2010's Epic Mickey brought this endearing little guy back into the spotlight and made us ask, Why was he ever pushed out of it?

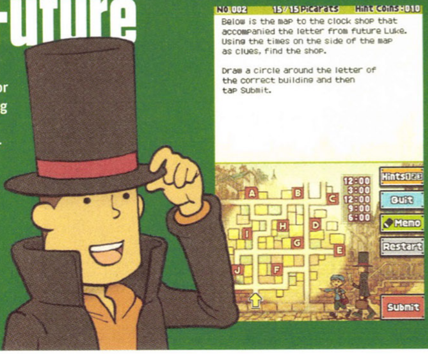
THE NOMINEES: Prince Fluff—Kirby's Epic Yarn (Wii), Kay—Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth (DS), Taupy—Sands of Destruction (DS), Oswald—Epic Mickey (Wii), Quote—Cave Story (Wii), Nia Lochlain—Infinite Space (DS)

BEST PUZZLE GAME

Professor Layton and the Unwound Future

Once again blurring the line between adventure game and puzzler, the Professor Layton series presents its most compelling and captivating quest yet. We're not sure where Level-5 pulls its ideas for Professor Layton's brainteasers from, but they only seem to be getting better—and we hope they don't run out anytime soon.

THE NOMINEES: Bejeweled Twist (DS), Picross 3D (DS), Professor Layton and the Unwound Future (DS), Super Scribblenauts (DS), Tetris Party Deluxe (DS), ThruSpace (Wii)



No. 002 15/15 Picarats Hint Coins: 010

Below is the map to the clock shop that accompanied the letter from future Luke. Using the times on the side of the map as clues, find the shop.

Draw a circle around the letter of the correct building and then tap Submit.

She is correct, of course.

BEST STORY/WRITING

Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors

If 999 was nothing more than the crafty mystery/thriller it initially appears to be, it would still have been a worthy candidate for a Best Story nomination. But as players explore the game's various outcomes and puzzle out the route to its true ending, the story evolves into a much deeper narrative packed with brilliantly executed twists. In the end, 999 is the rare game that doesn't aspire to copy films or novels, but instead explores original ideas that could only work in the medium of interactive games.

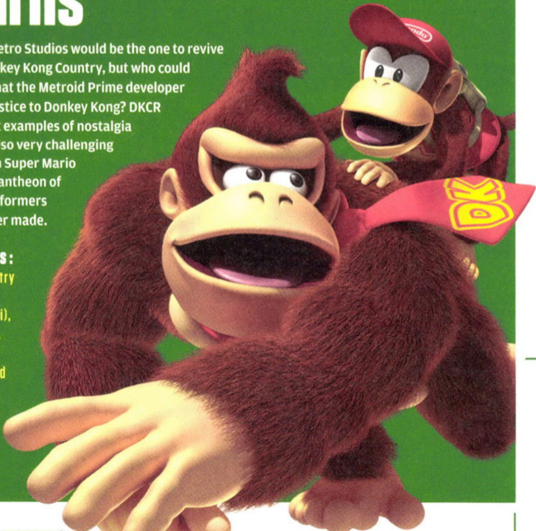
THE NOMINEES: Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth (DS), Epic Mickey (Wii), Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon (Wii), Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors (DS), No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle (Wii), Professor Layton and the Unwound Future (DS)

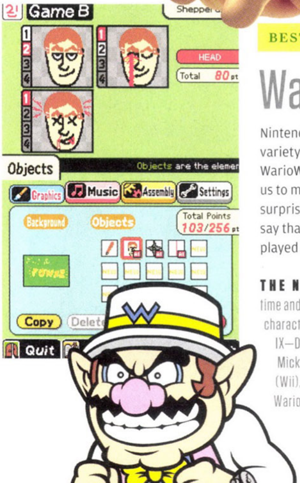
BEST RETRO REVIVAL

Donkey Kong Country Returns

It's fitting that Retro Studios would be the one to revive retro classic Donkey Kong Country, but who could have expected that the Metroid Prime developer would do such justice to Donkey Kong? DKCR is one of the best examples of nostalgia done right; it's also very challenging and belongs with Super Mario Galaxy 2 in the pantheon of the greatest platformers Nintendo has ever made.

THE NOMINEES: Donkey Kong Country Returns (Wii), GoldenEye 007 (Wii), Mega Man 10 (Wii), NBA Jam (Wii), Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions (DS), Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1 (Wii)





BEST NEW IDEA

WarioWare D.I.Y.

Nintendo consistently amazes us with the number and variety of microgames it manages to create for the WarioWare series. This year the developers challenged us to make our own WarioWare microgames using a surprisingly robust game-creation toolkit, and we have to say that seeing our own game ideas come to life—and get played by others—never ceases to thrill.

THE NOMINEES: And Yet It Moves—Rotate the world at any time and any place (Wii), Divergent Shift—Control two mirrored characters simultaneously in a platformer (DS), Dragon Quest IX—Downloadable quests and Tag Mode treasure maps (DS), Epic Mickey—Use paint and thinner to manipulate your surroundings (Wii), Photo Dojo—Turn photographs into a fighting game (DS), WarioWare D.I.Y.—Create and share your own microgames (DS)

FINISH STRONG AWARD

Professor Layton and the Unwound Future

There are numerous times when Professor Layton and the Unwound Future feels like it's reaching its climax, only to swerve in another direction. Even at the end, after the secret of future London is revealed, the game has one more masterful twist to toss the player's way. The result is a bittersweet ending that's arguably the most memorable moment of any game we played last year.

THE NOMINEES: Metroid: Other M (Wii), Professor Layton and the Unwound Future (DS), Sonic Colors (Wii), Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii)

BEST BONUS CONTENT

Super Mario Galaxy 2

After you collect all 120 stars, beat Bowser, and watch the ending, the game adds *another* 120 stars for you to hunt down! Snag them all, and the game unlocks the Grandmaster Galaxy, which is the ultimate test of Mario skills. No game has given us this much extra bang for our buck since The Legend of Zelda came with a secret second quest.

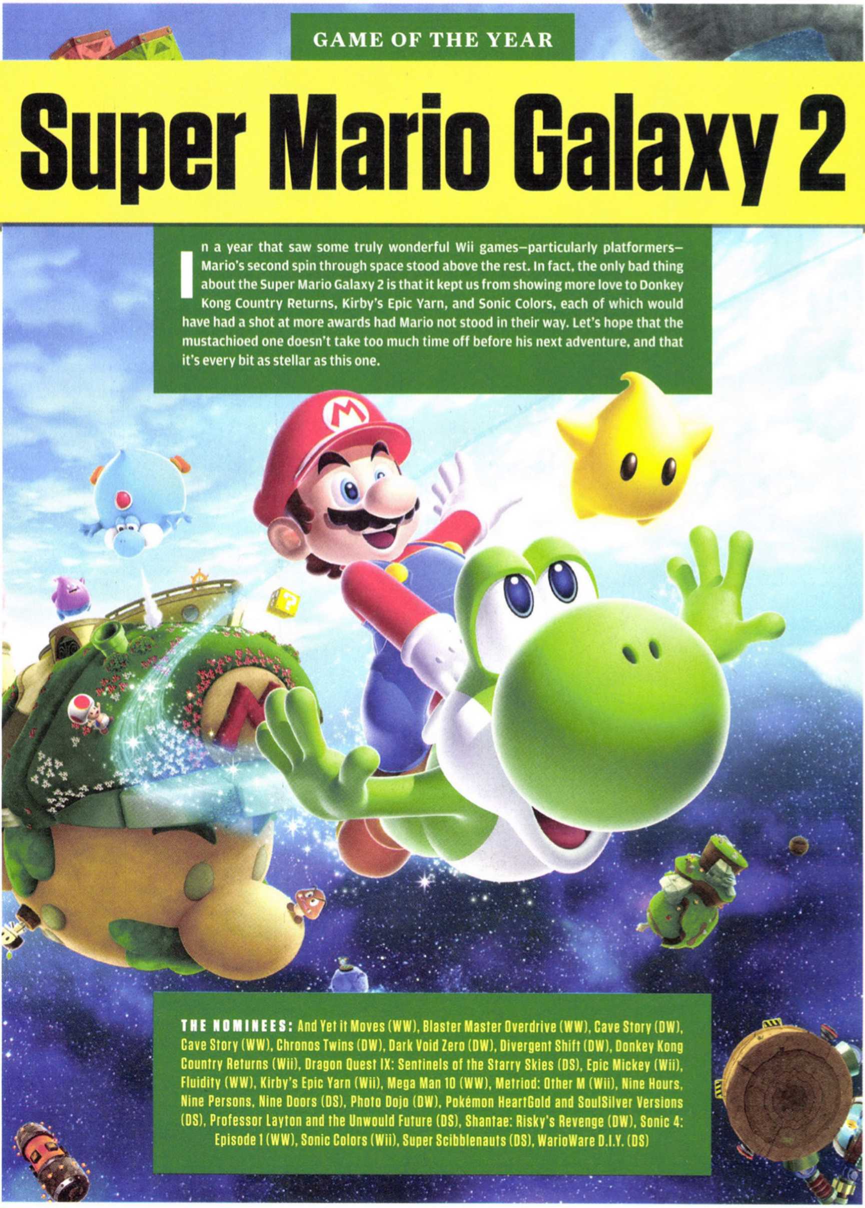
THE NOMINEES: Donkey Kong Country Returns (Wii), NBA Jam (Wii), Super Mario All-Stars (Wii), Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii)

Grandmaster Galaxy
Back
Fly to This Galaxy

GAME OF THE YEAR

Super Mario Galaxy 2

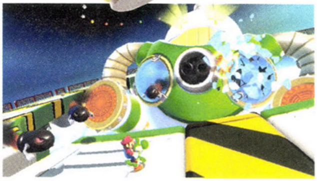
In a year that saw some truly wonderful Wii games—particularly platformers—Mario's second spin through space stood above the rest. In fact, the only bad thing about the Super Mario Galaxy 2 is that it kept us from showing more love to Donkey Kong Country Returns, Kirby's Epic Yarn, and Sonic Colors, each of which would have had a shot at more awards had Mario not stood in their way. Let's hope that the mustachioed one doesn't take too much time off before his next adventure, and that it's every bit as stellar as this one.



THE NOMINEES: And Yet it Moves (WW), Blaster Master Overdrive (WW), Cave Story (DW), Cave Story (WW), Chronos Twins (DW), Dark Void Zero (DW), Divergent Shift (DW), Donkey Kong Country Returns (Wii), Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies (DS), Epic Mickey (Wii), Fluidity (WW), Kirby's Epic Yarn (Wii), Mega Man 10 (WW), Metroid: Other M (Wii), Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors (DS), Photo Dojo (DW), Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions (DS), Professor Layton and the Unwould Future (DS), Shantae: Risky's Revenge (DW), Sonic 4: Episode 1 (WW), Sonic Colors (Wii), Super Scibblenauts (DS), WarioWare D.I.Y. (DS)

Readers' Choice

We've selected *our* favorite games of 2010, but what were *your* picks? Thousands of readers went online and cast their votes, so read on to see what your fellow Nintendo fans chose!



Wii GAME OF THE YEAR	Super Mario Galaxy 2
NINTENDO DS GAME OF THE YEAR	Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions
WiiWARE GAME OF THE YEAR	Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1
DSiWARE GAME OF THE YEAR	Shantae: Risky's Revenge
BEST Wii GRAPHICS	Super Mario Galaxy 2
BEST NINTENDO DS GRAPHICS	Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies
BEST ORIGINAL SCORE	Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii)
BEST ADVENTURE GAME	Epic Mickey (Wii)
BEST SOUND/VOICE ACTING	Professor Layton and the Unwound Future (DS)
BEST SHOOTER	GoldenEye 007 (Wii)
BEST MUSIC/RHYTHM GAME	Rock Band 3 (Wii)
BEST ROLE-PLAYING/ STRATEGY GAME	Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions (DS)
BEST SPORTS GAME	NBA Jam (Wii)
BEST ACTION GAME	Mega Man 10 (WW)
BEST PLATFORMER	Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii)
BEST PUZZLE GAME	Professor Layton and the Unwound Future (DS)
BEST MULTIPLAYER	GoldenEye 007 (Wii)
BEST NEW CHARACTER	Oswald—Epic Mickey (Wii)
BEST STORY/WRITING	Epic Mickey (Wii)
BEST NEW IDEA	Epic Mickey (Wii)—Use paint and thinner to manipulate your surroundings
BEST RETRO REVIVAL	Donkey Kong Country Returns (Wii)
OVERALL GAME OF THE YEAR	**Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii)**

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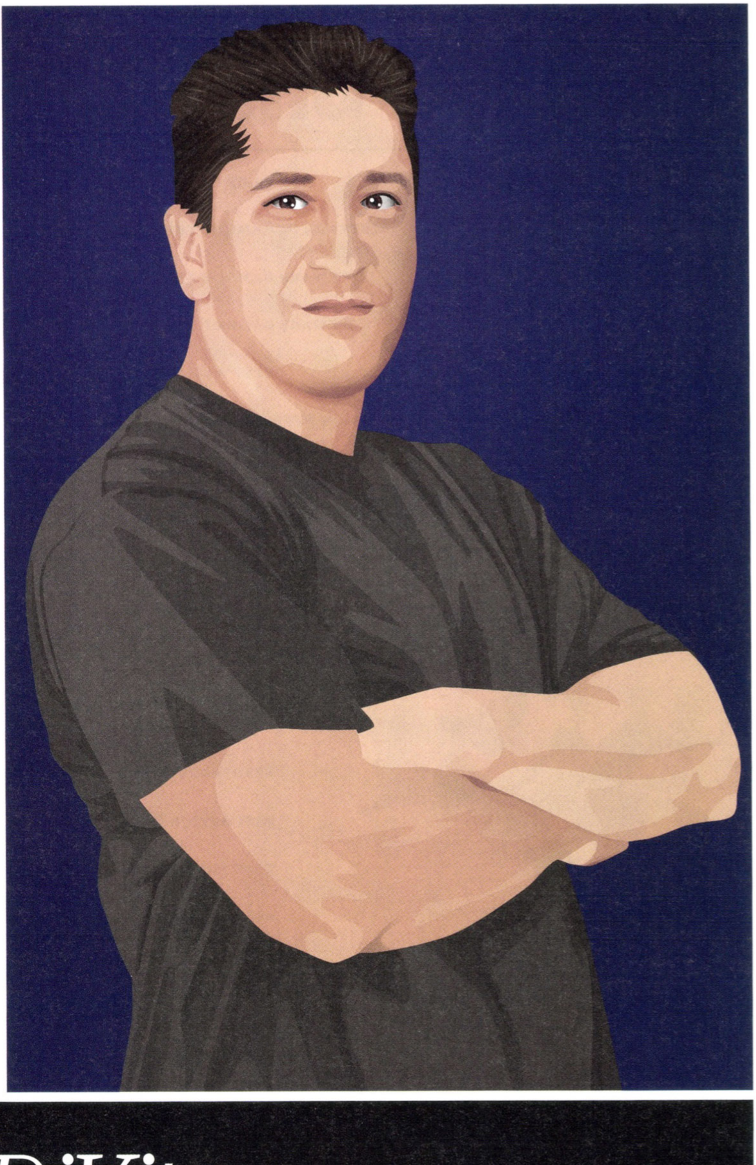
Power Profiles



DATE OF BIRTH
February 1, 1967

BIRTHPLACE
Chicago, Illinois

POSITION
Studio creative director for THQ Games in San Diego, California

BEST KNOWN FOR
Making hit arcade-style sports games, electrocuting enemies with his tomahawk

FAVORITE FOOD
A perfectly seasoned 16 oz. filet mignon

CURRENT PROJECTS
WWE All Stars

Sal DiVita

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

When it comes to arcade-style sports, Sal DiVita is a man who knows his stuff. As part of Midway in the 1990s he helped redefine the genre by working as an artist and designer on groundbreaking titles such as the coin-op versions of NBA Jam, NFL Blitz, and WWF WrestleMania. But unlike most game creators, DiVita didn't just *develop* games; he also *starred* in them. His digitized likeness can be seen in titles such as Mortal Kombat 3 (portraying Nightwolf and a trio of robotic ninjas) and Cruis'n USA (as the infamous Beefcake Boy). These days DiVita tends to stay in the developer's chair as creative director at THQ's San Diego studios, but his passion for high-octane arcade-style game making hasn't wavered; he's currently working on the hard-hitting WWE All Stars.

NINTENDO POWER
How did you originally get into the video game business?

SAL DIVITA I originally went to school to be a commercial artist, wanting to do illustrations and paintings for book covers, posters, and other advertising art. During the process, I was introduced to an Amiga... home computer, and it altered my direction a bit. I taught myself how to use the computer to create graphics and animation, as there were no schools teaching these subjects at the time. With that knowledge and skill set, I was able to get hired at Midway Games as a computer-graphics artist.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I don't know how surprising this will be to anyone, but at some point as a kid, I decided I wanted to be something that allowed me to be physical and a bit of a daredevil. I thought of being either a stuntman or—you guessed it—a professional wrestler. Performing stuntlike actions was thrilling to me, and I remember performing many feats of idiocy trying to feed that hunger. When you're young, you think you're indestructible until you have that "one too many" eye-opening experience that makes you aware of your mortality and breaks you of that behavior, more or less.

As far as my desire to be a professional wrestler, [it] tied in with those delusional, thrill-seeking thoughts but also went so much beyond that. I admired (and still do more so than ever) so much about the pro wrestling form of entertainment, not only on the physical side, like the intensity of the combat performances, the precision of the athleticism, and the timing of the situations that can occur, but also the stories, entertaining drama, personalities of the talent, production of the talent entrances, the professionalism of the overall presentation, etc. It's an amazing spectacle.

What were your early years in the gaming industry like?

That time in the game industry was so different than today in so many ways. There were only a handful of team members involved in the creation of the game itself, so we all had to take on multiple roles and responsibilities. This taught us to think in regards to "do whatever, whenever, however" to accomplish what we wanted to do. We were on the cutting edge of game making and arcade hardware, which meant we were making things up as we went and thinking way outside the box because there was no box! That's a key frame of mind I still hold today.

Another memorable aspect of that time was how emotionally unrefined we still were at that young age. It's a good thing we didn't have an HR department back then! I can remember some pretty intense and explosive screaming matches happening around the studio. I won't lie—I was involved in my share of them, but having been raised within an Italian family, that didn't really faze me much.

Why do you think NBA Jam struck a chord with so many players?

I think that because it was the first digitized sports game to look so close to an authentic television broadcast, it was the first time players felt like they were controlling live television and their favorite teams and players. Another thing was that the game was easy to pick up and play, and highly responsive, allowing players to feel more in control of their actions, which made it easier to succeed. It had great audio execution, and the great voice performance of Tim Kitzrow made it special as well. And let's not forget the great novelty of the exaggerated dunks, complete with the ability to shatter the backboard!

What did you think of the recent NBA Jam?

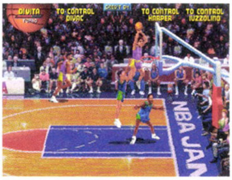
It's an amazing reproduction and improvement of the original! I can't believe how great of a job the team did in toeing the line of keeping it authentic to the original but evolving it enough to make it fresh, including features of the future versions of the original, like NBA Hangtime and NBA Showtime.

You were right there in the middle of an incredible creative nexus at Midway when everything they were doing was exploding as a huge arcade hit. What was it like being part of that?

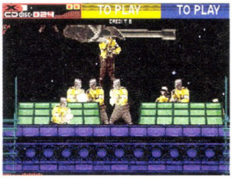
I think there were a few key factors that made that time special for us and led to the many successes we had. We had such an uncanny talent density in our group at Midway at that time. Nearly everyone we had back then was, and still is, a superstar in this industry even today.

GAMEOGRAPHY

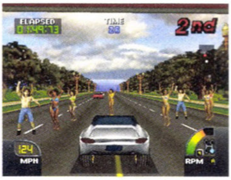
Entering the business during the heyday of arcade gaming, DiVita contributed to a number of coin-op megahits, nearly all of which were ported to consoles such as the Super NES or Nintendo 64. He was also involved with many of the games' updates and sequels.



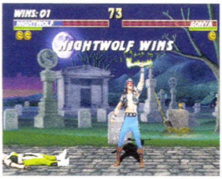
NBA JAM
1993, ARCADE
ARTIST/ANIMATOR/DESIGNER/SECRET CHARACTER



REVOLUTION X
1994, ARCADE
ACTOR (NON NATIVE)



CRUIS'N USA
1994, ARCADE
ACTOR (BEEFCAKE BOY)



MORTAL KOMBAT 3
1995, ARCADE
ACTOR (NIGHTWOLF, SEKTOR, CYRAX, AND SMOKE)

Power Profiles

So many cared so much about the quality of the work they produced and about bringing the quality bar up from the last game that just shipped. Each game was a jump up from the last. Also, there was such a sense of personal pride and ownership in our particular aspects of the game, which made everyone analyze and reanalyze their work, constantly thinking of ways to improve it on their own. We were a very tight group of friends as well, even across teams, and many of us hung out together outside of work. We made each other laugh a lot because we all had similar interests and a similar sense of humor, and that fed into our games. Our fun times together translated directly into that "soul" that Midway games had in that era. I think once we started having less time for that kind of interaction, the "soul" faded away for many of us.

How did you make the transition from being a game designer to being in front of the camera?
I made the transition in front of the camera during the beginning stages of the WWF WrestleMania project. We needed to prototype our gameplay and visual quality before it could get fully "green-lit," but in order to do that, we needed a person in front of the video camera to be digitized performing the moves. Since we couldn't yet have access to the official talent, I volunteered to jump into a singlet and be our prototype wrestler. The shirt came off, the spandex and baby oil came on, and I performed a cross section of professional wrestling-style combat actions. As the wrestling-game prototype came together featuring "the oily wrestler," friends on other teams took notice and asked me to play characters for their games. One thing led to another, and eventually I, like a few others, became common talent for various Midway games, most likely because we were convenient and free of charge. So, to reiterate, although I occasionally took a day here and there doing favors portraying characters, it didn't mean I ever stopped working on the creation side of games. I'm a game developer first and foremost, then a character talent if asked.

Of the Mortal Kombat 3 characters you played, which one was your favorite?
If I had to pick my favorite character to play, it would have to be Nightwolf. I liked the whole Native American theme with the war paint, the long hair, and the armbands. I just wish I had the body to make the half-vest and tights look as cool on me as they did on the concept drawing. Actually, I felt a little like the Ultimate Warrior, except only 10 percent as big and ripped.

> *"...my shirt and my dignity were gone, there was baby oil all over me, and Beefcake Boy was born."*

Of course, you also played Beefcake Boy in Cruis'n USA.
Ha! There wasn't much to my role, really. One day, while I was talking with Eugene Jarvis, he started evaluating and poking at me like a piece of livestock and asked me if I would be a character in his Cruis'n USA game. We were all friends, so of course I agreed to it, not really knowing what I'd be doing. I got to the shoot sporting my cool mullet, long denim shorts, gym shoes with ankle socks and a T-shirt. I don't really remember exactly what happened during the course of that shoot, but I do remember that by the end of it, my shirt and my dignity were gone, there was baby oil all over me, and Beefcake Boy was born.

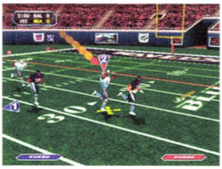
If someone made a new Cruis'n USA, would you resume the role of Beefcake Boy? If not, who should play the modern, updated Beefcake Boy?
The passing years are not being as kind to my body as I'd like, so I would defer that role to someone who could do it justice. I think one person who could succeed me in that role today would be John Cena. Think about it: his overall look is very similar to Beefcake Boy. He wears the long denim shorts, gym shoes with ankle socks, no shirt, and he has somewhat of a "beef-cakey" body.

Do you have any interesting stories from the WrestleMania video capture sessions?
The session was with Yokozuna and Mr. Fuji, and I was directing the performances. Each day of those capture sessions was long and exhausting. We had the talent performing hundreds of moves, and we made them do many of them over and over again until we were happy with the performance for our game. Yokozuna was not used to doing so much for so long, but he was being a trooper and we had a great rapport. After we had him run on the treadmill for a period of time, he needed an extended break. He was fading, so to lighten his spirit, I jokingly told him that his next move was going to have to be a backflip. He thought I was serious and huffed and grimaced, telling me to do one first. I'd never done one, but for the sake of putting him in a better mood, I figured I'd try. I had a teammate spot me, and with a little apprehension, I gave it a whirl. Crunch! I landed right on my neck. All I remember seeing was a white flash, and I thought I broke my neck. I wanted to cover up my pain, so I tried to play it cool. Yokozuna asked me if I was OK, and when I lied and said, "Yes," he laughed at me and my epic failure. Mr. Fuji knew I wasn't OK and immediately went to work on my neck and back, eventually helping it out tremendously. We finished the shoot that day, and I felt good enough to

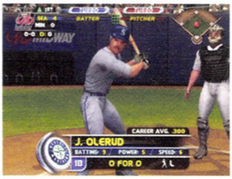
GAMEOGRAPHY

WWF WRESTLEMANIA
1995, ARCADE
LEAD ARTIST/GAME DESIGN/ANIMATION

NBA HANGTIME
1996, ARCADE
LEAD ARTIST/GAME DESIGN/ANIMATION/SECRET CHARACTER



NFL BLITZ
1997, ARCADE
LEAD ARTIST/GAME DESIGN/ANIMATION/MOTION-CAPTURE ACTOR/VOICE ACTOR/SECRET CHARACTER



MLB SLUGFEST 20-03
2002, GAMECUBE
PROJECT LEAD/ANIMATION/MOTION-CAPTURE ACTOR/VOICE ACTOR

go out on the town with them that night, but that's another story.

Who are your all-time favorite wrestling performers? And who do you consider the most underrated?
My all-time favorite performers are the Ultimate Warrior, Undertaker, Hulk Hogan, Bret Hart, Andre the Giant, Rey Mysterio, Shawn Michaels, John Morrison, Sheamus, The Miz, and CM Punk. Each of these performers has an amazing quality about him, but I think the most underrated are the ones who perform as "bad guys." There's something I find incredibly entertaining about how much some of those guys can anger a crowd globally and not have a fear of being lynched after the show!

How have things changed in the gaming industry since you started?
When I started, the game industry was an incredibly fun and fast-moving process. We had an idea, had a quick discussion over it, and things happened quickly. Now the industry has changed into such a high-profile, process-oriented, and technological behemoth. There's a lot of red tape involved, and there needs to be, because there are so many people who can be tied to something as simple as adding a new element to your onscreen display. The idea has to be designed and written up, as well as discussed for technical feasibility.... Nobody outside of the gaming industry truly understands the massive depth, tediousness, and time consumption involved with game development. I have a massive amount of respect for every development team in the industry that can ship a top-quality game!

What aspect of creating a video game do you enjoy the most?
I absolutely love nearly every aspect of making a game. I look at every part of the game as a piece of art, and I think about how to make that piece of art as attractive and pleasing to experience as possible. Game design, character models, animations, environments, user interface, character controls, and audio presentation—I love being involved in each of those aspects of the game. However, if I had to pick my one true love of game creation, it would be animation. To me, animation is key to having a great experience in a game. Great-looking and -feeling animation and controls bring a game to life and add such a sense of immersion because they are something people subconsciously respond to and recognize.

When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem while creating a game, what's your process for working through it?
Whoever screams the loudest wins! Nah, that's not the case anymore. We've evolved from there...mostly. When there's a particularly difficult problem, there are a few ways we get to our solutions. The first is fairly obvious and logical. We get our most knowledgeable team members on the issue together to talk about it. We each give our input, discuss the pros and cons of each idea, add to each other's ideas, discuss the amount of time and risk of each, and with all that data, make a decision on what solution we're going to invest the time into and try first.... Another process we have is if there are a few different solutions and they're all easy to try, we can quickly prototype each of the ideas, play with each for some time, and then make a decision based on our gut reaction to each prototype. It's great to have the tools to implement elements into the game quickly so you can see the ideas in action, rather than imagining them in your mind or on a piece of paper.

> *"Whoever screams the loudest wins! Nah, that's not the case anymore. We've evolved from there...mostly."*

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect, and why?
There are a few who come to mind, one being Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto, but Midway's Mark Turmell, Ed Boon, and Eugene Jarvis are game creators I've had personal experience working close to and with who I admire. Just look at the track records of their games and you'll see success after success. They're always taking their games to the next level and doing something novel and innovative each time. Working with Mark and in close proximity to Ed and Eugene and their teams for all those years really taught me a lot and has influenced my game-making perspectives to this day.

Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?
I'm not much of a literary reader, but I do enjoy movies and TV, so I'll focus on those. As far as movie directors go, I'm a big admirer of James Cameron, Peter Jackson, Martin Scorsese, Ridley Scott, Tony Scott, Steven Spielberg (earlier in his filmmaking), the Farrelly brothers, Trey Parker, and Matt Stone. They've made a big impression on my development, and I enjoy much of their work for various reasons. Their films have a quality about them that I find myself dissecting and analyzing, even frame by frame at times, trying to understand what about particular scenes make them so special to me.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
Easy! The superpower of flight! No, wait—maybe invisibility. No, no—definitely flight. Ugh! Can I have two? OK-flight for sure. I like the idea of being able to freely blast off from wherever I am and make a beeline at Mach 2 to anywhere in the world I want to go without being impeded by vehicle traffic [or] traffic signals, and landing precisely where I need to be. Imagine how much more time I would have to do more stuff! Oh, and I guess I could also occasionally use that superpower to swoop down and save a few people from harm's way. Well, that depends.

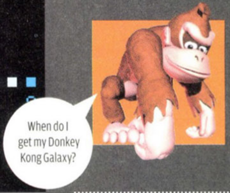
GAMEOGRAPHY

PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY
2004, PLAYSTATION 2
VISUAL DIRECTOR/COMBAT DESIGN/ IN-GAME CINEMATIC DIRECTOR/ MOTION-CAPTURE ACTOR/VOICE ACTOR

GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS
2005, XBOX
CREATIVE DIRECTOR/COMBAT DESIGN/ ANIMATION/REAL-TIME CINEMATIC DIRECTOR/ MOTION-CAPTURE ACTOR/VOICE ACTOR

TNA IMPACT
2008, Wii
CREATIVE DIRECTOR/COMBAT DESIGN/ MOTION-CAPTURE ACTOR/VOICE ACTOR

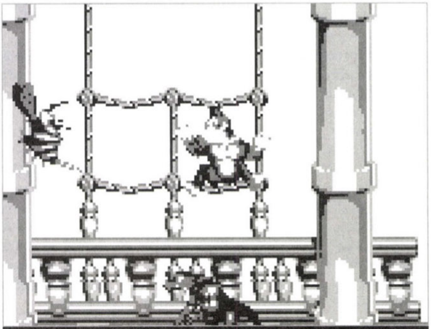
WWE ALL STARS
2011, Wii
CREATIVE DIRECTOR/COMBAT DESIGN/ MOTION-CAPTURE ACTOR/VOICE ACTOR


When do I get my Donkey Kong Galaxy?

Donkey Kong Land

The big ape leaves his country for a new land.

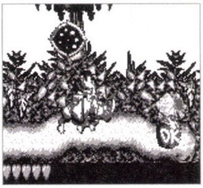
PLATFORM: **GAME BOY**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **RARE**
RELEASE DATE: **JUNE 1995**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **68, 69, 74, 76, 78, 81, 82, 86, 89**
NUMBER OF APPEARANCES BY FUNKY KONG: **0, SADLY**



When surrounded by angry Kremlings and Zingers, DK knows that it's sometimes best to grab the nearest rope and climb as fast as you can!

Nintendo's 1994 release of Donkey Kong Country on the Super NES proved that you didn't need a fancy new CD-based game system to experience stunning graphics. But could the same results be achieved on less-powerful hardware? Or in black and white? Given how important groundbreaking visuals were to the notoriety DKC received, it was surprising to hear that Nintendo would be bringing the series to the Game Boy with Donkey Kong Land.

Although it's not necessarily reflected in screenshots, the results weren't half bad. The game's prerendered sprites look pretty impressive on the Game Boy, even if the system's limited color palette sometimes causes objects and enemies to blend in with the background. (Playing on a Game Boy Advance adds an extra splash of color to the characters, helping them to stand out better.)



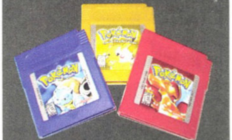
Given the similar graphical styles, one might assume that Donkey Kong Land is simply a portable version of Donkey Kong Country, but in fact it's a sequel, complete with new levels, enemies, and bosses. Donkey Kong Land's story, which involves Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong seeking to reclaim their banana hoard from King K. Rool, may be a rehash of the one in DKC, but the instruction manual for DKL provides an extra bit of humorous explication: Cranky Kong, the Kong family's elderly patriarch, is upset about the success of Donkey Kong Country. He explains to Donkey Kong that the game only sold well because of its "fancy graphics." This prompts DK and Diddy to continue their adventure on an "old-fashioned" 8-bit machine.

The gameplay in DKL is very similar to that of its 16-bit big brother. You lead the Kongs through levels full of collectible goodies, and barrels that are used to launch DK and Diddy to new locations. Within each stage are multiple secret areas that house more hidden items and extra lives. Of the five animal friends from Donkey Kong Country, however, only two made the journey to Donkey Kong Land. Riding Rambi the Rhino and Expresso the Ostrich allows you to burst through obstacles and float over large pits, respectively.

Despite the fond memories that many have for Donkey Kong Country, its portable sequel doesn't get as much attention as it should. It may not have the looks of DKC, but the gameplay in DKL is very true to the popular series. **—PHIL T.**

YELLOW GOLD

If the original Legend of Zelda taught Nintendo fans anything, it's that games that come in uniquely colored cartridges are special. That's why it was such a treat to see the words "Banana Yellow Game Pak Included!" emblazoned on the front of Donkey Kong Land's box. Nintendo was clearly proud of what DKL achieved—even the Super NES DK games were in plain ol' gray cartridges. The different-colored Game Boy carts were not something gamers had seen before, and the bright-yellow housing made DKL (and its two sequels) stand out in our collections. Of course, the eventual release of the various Pokémon titles would make colored Game Boy game cartridges a more common occurrence, but for a while Donkey Kong Land was a colorful standout.



Like Donkey Kong Land, the Pokémon titles featured specially colored cartridges.

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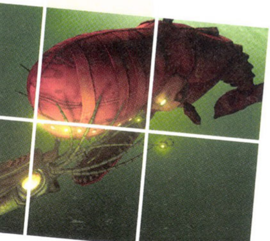

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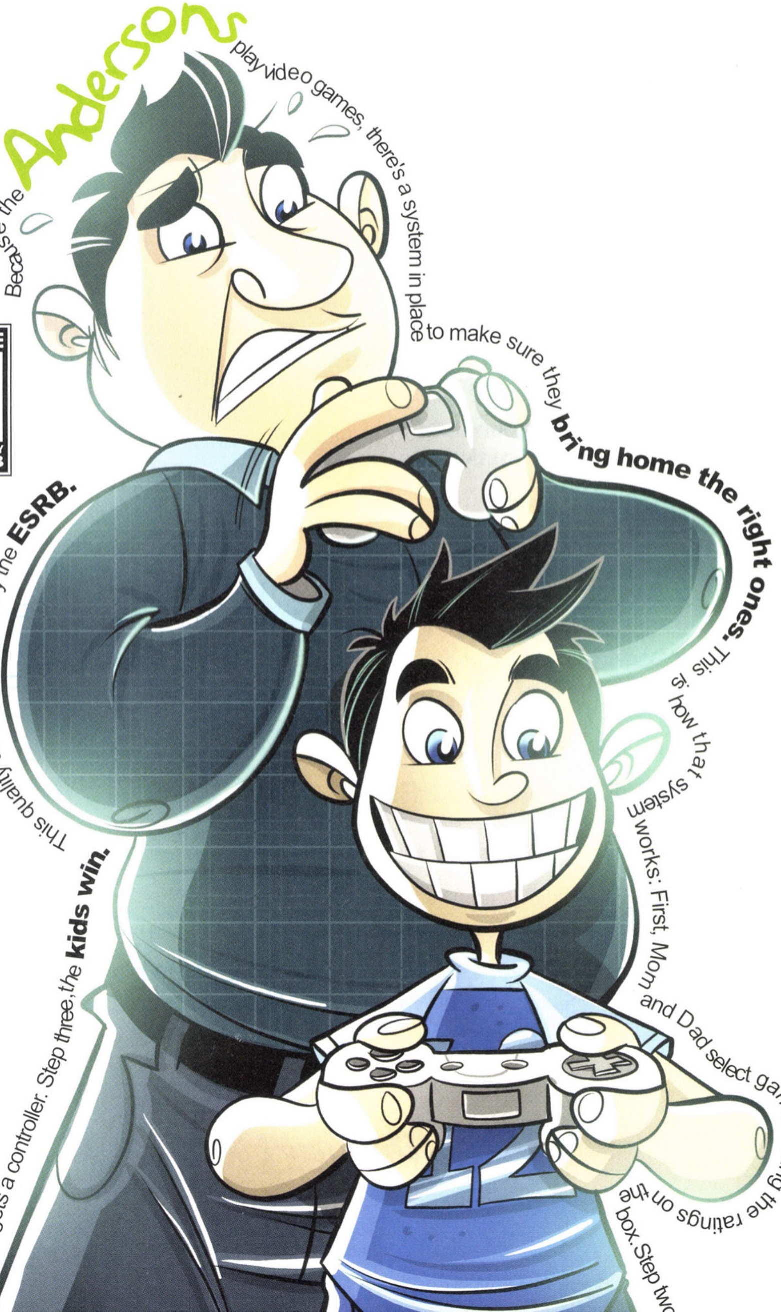

Because the Andersons play video games, there's a system in place to make sure they **bring home the right ones.** This is how that system works: First, Mom and Dad select games using the ratings on the box. Step two

everyone gets a controller. Step three, the **kids win.**

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REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATEST GAMES

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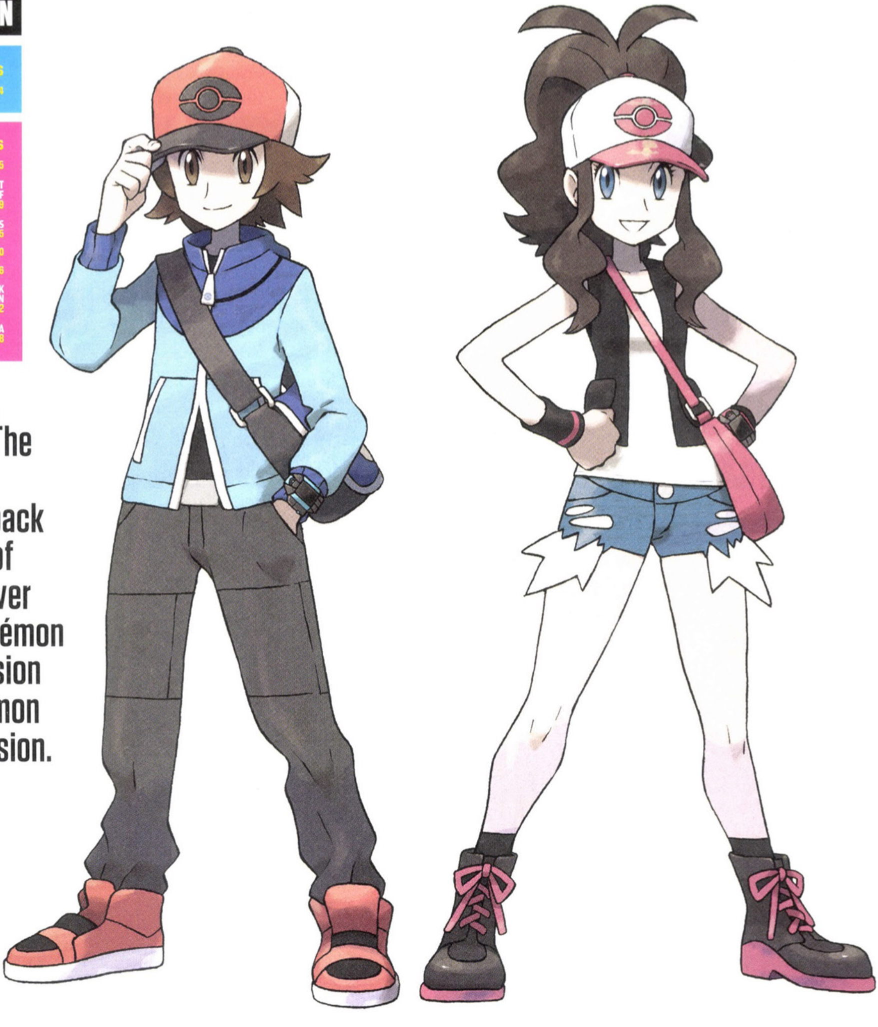
Get ready, Trainers! The Pokémon series is back with two of its best-ever titles: Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version.



Monochrome Masterpieces

POKÉMON BLACK VERSION AND POKÉMON WHITE VERSION

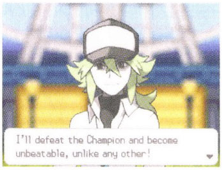
RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **GAME FREAK inc.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

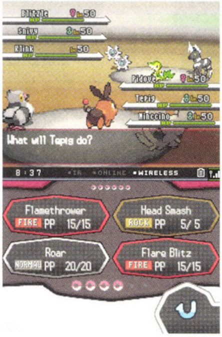
Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions were fantastic games, but they weren't exactly new to Pokémon fans. Sure, there were all sorts of great added features and enhancements, but as re-imaginings of the Game Boy Color's Pokémon Gold and Silver Versions, there was still plenty of familiar territory for longtime players. There hasn't been a completely original Pokémon adventure since Pokémon Diamond and Pearl Versions, which was all the way back in 2007, making the release of Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version all the more exciting.

This new journey is set in the Unova region, a land far removed from previous regions like Kanto or Sinnoh. Unova is a lot more urban than what we've seen in other Pokémon titles, and the new environments make exploration more enjoyable. The Pokémon games have never been known for having intricate stories, but you might find yourself following the plot more closely this time around. The two playable main characters (a boy and a girl, of course) are a tad older than the typical Pokémon protagonist, and the challenges they face are fairly engaging. The new villains, Team Plasma, are seemingly driven by pure intentions—they see Pokémon as being oppressed by their Trainers, and they wish to release the innocent creatures. Of course, their methods are less than ideal, but it's nice to face off against a group that isn't as overtly evil as, say, Team Rocket.

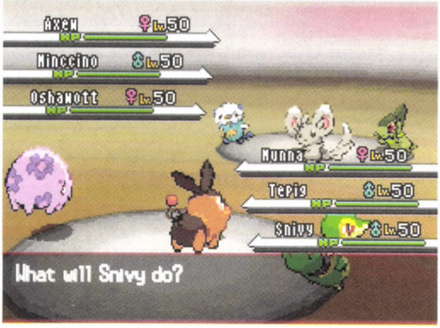
Despite the slightly more mature storyline, nothing is different about the core gameplay in these titles. As usual, you travel around the Pokémon-littered landscape in an attempt to "catch 'em all." Along the way, you'll face off against ample numbers of rival Pokémon Trainers, earn multiple Gym Badges, and eventually confront the Elite Four. There's a reason that the basics of Pokémon have remained unchanged all this time—they're pretty much perfect. Depending on a player's level of dedication to the game, it can be as deep as you want. It's easy enough to



I'll defeat the Champion and become unbeatable, unlike any other!



What will Tepig do?



What will Snivy do?

[Above] You can now participate in three-on-three Triple Battles.

The Pokémon are waiting for us inside that gift box.

If you have the money, you can get anything you want in this city!

play the game casually by simply choosing your favorite Pokémon, leveling them up, and earning badges, but you can also extend the journey by tracking down the many side quests and activities that you'll find with some extra effort. Hardcore players can spend hundreds of hours catching, training, and breeding Pokémon to form a carefully curated team with an expertly strategic set of stats and moves in order to dominate competition play. It's incredibly versatile.

Still, though the core gameplay is the same, there is a lot that's new here. Plenty of tweaks and additions help make the experience all the richer. Little touches like combining the Pokémon Centers and the Poké Marts into one building speed up the action while the new three-on-three Triple Battles force you to rethink how you take your team into competition. The addition of seasons keeps things fresh by providing new things to do as time goes by (one calendar month equals an in-game season).

Perhaps what most sets these two new games apart is their selection of Pokémon. Although it may cause some fans much heartbreak, you will not encounter any familiar Pokémon during these games' main quest. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. No longer can you rely on the same familiar Pokémon with the same well-known moves. Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version force you to develop new techniques and strategies as you learn what these new Pokémon are capable of. The updated roster also makes random battles more exciting as you're constantly discovering unique new Pokémon, which, on the whole, are a pretty charming bunch. (Pikachu fans can relax, though—once you complete the main game, a new area opens up that contains Pokémon from previous games.)

Like those in other recent Pokémon titles, the game's world is realized through some nice-looking polygonal graphics. Although most of the game is viewed from the usual bird's-eye perspective, occasionally the camera shifts, making the game feel much more cinematic (the shift is probably most noticeable in Castelia City, the large, urban hub of Unova). The dynamic alternate views help sell the idea of exploring an exciting new world, and leave you wishing that they were utilized more throughout the game.

Battle animations also show welcome improvements. The Pokémon are certainly more active now than ever before, and the moving cameras during the battles make things more visually engaging. In light of such snazzy presentation upgrades, some longtime battle elements seem slightly out of place. Are the simple fainting animations and sound effects beloved, untouchable elements of Pokémon, or could they stand to be spruced up a bit? Personally, the quality of the new enhancements make me excited to see what more could be done.

Those who get into the multiplayer aspect of Pokémon (and why wouldn't you?) definitely won't be disappointed with the many options that have been implemented to help bring players together. In addition to trading via the Global Trade Station, you can scan for nearby players wirelessly, do trades and real-time battles with random people around the world, video-chat with your friends (when using a Nintendo DSi system), and more. These features create a deeper sense of community than has ever been seen in a Pokémon game.

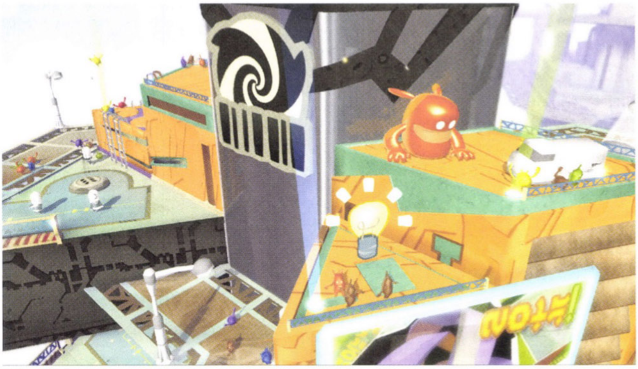
Oshawott ♂Lv50
HP
Zekrom Lv50
HP
168/168

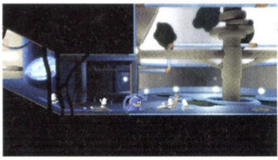
What will Zekrom do?

Freedom of Choice

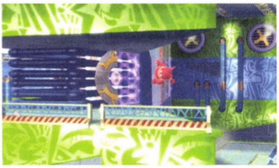
When playing a Pokémon RPG, it's a bummer if you choose a starter Pokémon that ends up being weak against the Pokémon types that you face in the first Gym. Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version have a clever way of dealing with that problem. Upon reaching the first Gym in Striaton City, you discover that there are actually three Gym Leaders there. One specializes in Fire-type Pokémon, one specializes in Grass-types, and the other specializes in Water-types. The leader you battle depends on which Pokémon you chose as your starter. You will always end up challenging the one that your starter is weak against, which seems pretty lame, right? Well, not so fast. Before entering the Gym, be sure to thoroughly explore around the city. You'll find a person who gives you a Pokémon. This gift is one of three element-based monkey-like Pokémon that will have a type advantage over whatever Pokémon you face in the Gym!

The Pokémon series's latest pair of adventures is as addictive as ever. Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version stay faithful to their roots, but there are enough new features (and Pokémon) to ensure that even lifelong fans won't get bored. Additionally, considering that the new Pokémon lineup gives the game a bit of a "series reboot" feel, these two titles are a good starting point for newcomers to the Pokémon phenomenon. —**PHIL T.**





de Blob 2 shines in the side-scrolling stages.



Paint Winner

DE BLOB 2

RATING: 8.0

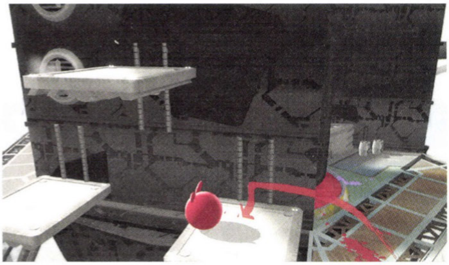
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **BLUE TONGUE ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

As a good sequel should, de Blob 2 gives you more of what worked about its predecessor while improving upon what didn't. The unique painting mechanic, charming characters, and solid platforming from the original de Blob return, but new features have been added to the mix, helping to give this title more depth and variety.

For instance, main character Blob can now acquire upgrades (granting him improved defensive capabilities, for example) and power-ups (such as a shield that protects him from hazards like electricity, fire, and ink). Additionally, another player can join in on the action, Super Mario Galaxy-style; using a second Wii Remote controller, your buddy can launch paint at enemies. (The game also has a separate competitive two-player mode that's fun for a while.) And speaking of controls, de Blob 2 has less of an emphasis on gesturing—I especially appreciate that the jump command changed from being a motion-controlled gesture to being a simple tap of the A Button.

But the best new feature is the side-scrolling gameplay. The bulk of de Blob 2 is played as the original de Blob was; you explore environments, defeat opponents, and paint structures, bringing vitality to an otherwise bleak land. Throughout each stage, though, there are passages—usually leading underground or into specific buildings—that Blob can enter, transporting him from a 3D world to a 2D area. Aside from the old-school feel, what I like about these 2D levels is the fact that I don't have to fuss with the camera. See, the traditional de Blob gameplay is certainly enjoyable, but the camera doesn't always follow the action as well as it should, which can be particularly annoying when platforming. Because the camera is a nonissue in the 2D sections, you can more easily focus on the platforming, puzzle-solving, and baddie-bashing.

There's quite a lot of combat in de Blob 2—and it makes sense given that Blob and his pals are freedom fighters trying to take the world back from the oppressive clutches of the INKT Corporation. The battles are fairly straightforward; you lock on to a target by holding Z (you can tap the Control Pad to change targets), then either jump on it with A or ram it with B. (This is assuming that you have enough Paint Points to spend on defeating your adversary, as every attack—even something as simple as smashing a crate—consumes paint.) Because holding down Z allows you to automatically lock on to the next target, it's pretty easy to dispatch enemies in quick succession. However, the lock-on function doesn't prioritize that well. You may end up using up paint to smash boxes instead of the baddies if you're not paying close attention to what you're locked on to.



Of course, these are relatively minor complaints. de Blob 2 is a wonderful game that's actually pretty beefy. Granted, things can get repetitive as you're playing through all 12 of the side quest-filled stages, but the simple yet fun gameplay, the assortment of locales, and some top-notch cutscenes do a great job of keeping you going. —**JUSTIN C.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT LAUNCH-WINDOW NINTENDO 3DS GAMES ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST?

JUSTIN CHENG

I'm a huge fan of fighting games, so I'm definitely excited about Dead or Alive Dimensions and Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Like Justin, I'm very interested in both 3D fighting titles. But I'm also looking forward to Steel Diver. It's fresh and original, and the 3D effects are great.

CODY MARTIN

I too love me a good fighting game, so I'm also going to have to side with Justin on this one. I have to admit though, Street Fighter has me a little more excited.

CHRIS SLATE

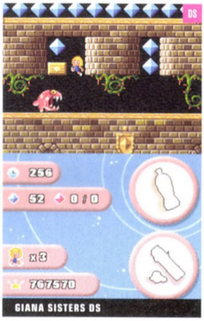
Topping my (very long) list is Pilotwings Resort, Street Fighter IV 3D Edition, Ridge Racer 3D, and the Nintendo 3DS system's built-in AR games, which look like they might provide the kind of new-system "wow" experience that Wii Sports gave the Wii Console.

PHIL THEOBALD

I've been itching for a new Pilotwings ever since the Nintendo 64 version. It's taken 15 years, but I'm happy that it's finally arrived.

STEVE THOMASON

The arcade trifecta of Dead or Alive Dimensions, Street Fighter IV, and Ridge Racer 3D sit atop my launch-window shopping list. I'm also intrigued by Steel Diver because I've always had a bizarre fascination with commanding my own naval vessel.



GIANA SISTERS DS

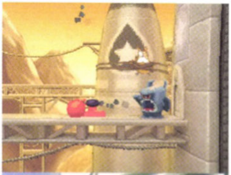
GIANA SISTERS DS

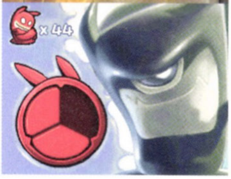
RATING: 9.0

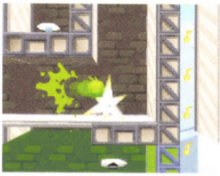
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **DESTINEER**
DEVELOPER: **SPELLBOUND ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

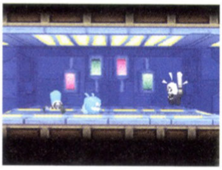
With origins dating back to old computers like the Commodore 64 and Amiga, the Giana Sisters have been plucked out of obscurity to star in a new DS adventure. Well, one of them has—*really* hardcore gamers will notice that one sister, Maria, is absent from this game. One could diplomatically describe Giana Sisters DS by saying that it strongly resembles the original Super Mario Bros. From its breakable blocks to its hidden coins to its fireball power-ups, it's exceedingly clear where this game got its inspiration. Sure, it's not innovative, but that doesn't mean that it can't be fun.

The levels, while sometimes simplistic, are very well designed and contain lots of secrets to discover, and the tight control makes navigating them a breeze. The characters, enemies, and backgrounds are all beautifully detailed, and there is some excellent animation to be seen. Likewise, the soundtrack is wonderfully upbeat. There's a lot of charm in this game. The one real flaw is that Giana Sisters remains rather easy until the very end. Unless you attempt to track down the red gems in each level (which unlock bonus stages), you'll plow through the game with minimal effort. Even so, don't let that deter you from playing this terrific platformer. —**PHIL T.**









Portable Painting Power

DE BLOB 2

RATING: 8.0

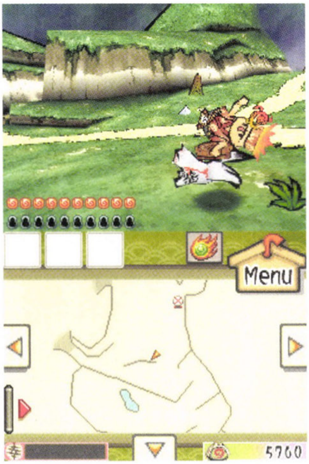
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **HALFBRICK STUDIOS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

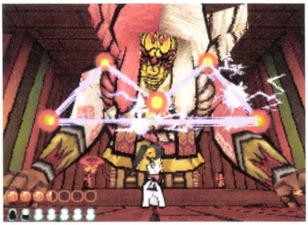
Considering how the original de Blob on Wii was such a vibrant and creative adventure, it's a shame that plans for a Nintendo DS version didn't pan out on the first go-round. Thankfully that's remedied with the sequel. The portable version of de Blob 2 packs a different flavor of color-splattering action soaked in tales of blobby revolution—one that's both pleasantly familiar and completely fresh.

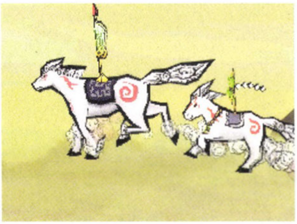
Sporting a separate story from that of its console counterpart, de Blob 2 on DS follows the titular Blob on a romp through the jungle, where he stumbles across the secret laboratory base of INKT Corporation's diabolical scientist Dr. Von Blot. The evil doc is conducting untoward experiments on captured Raydians, and Blob dives into the fray to spew brilliant colors of paint in all direction and recover his comrades.

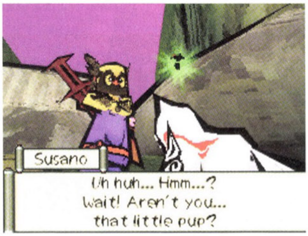
Bouncing through tightly winding corridors and tackling color-based puzzles in this 2D platformer is a big change of pace from the open-world exploration of de Blob on Wii, but that doesn't dilute the clever painting mechanics that made the original so enjoyable. As you absorb paint and bounce through the drab gray corridors, the environment is bathed in whatever color you've soaked up. Beyond aesthetics, this fun element plays directly into combat and puzzles. You can defeat certain enemies and activate some switches only if you match their color and bounce into them. Some levels present you with painting puzzles that have you mixing colors to coat objects with the right hue to proceed.

New gameplay twists are woven in as you progress, and there's a ton of items to collect to unlock bonus levels, too. Though it's a tad short and on the easy side, de Blob 2 is a great blend of new components and the bits that made the first title a hit.
—NATHAN M.

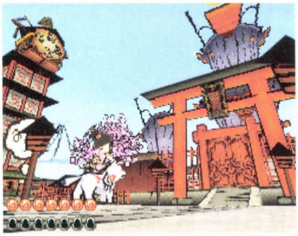






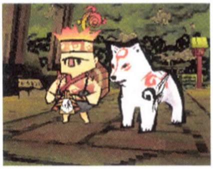


Uh huh... Hmm...?
Wait! Aren't you...
that little pup?



Puppy Love

[Above left] Returning fans will recognize quite a few familiar faces. [Below] Okamiden may be the most adorable game of all time.



OKAMIDEN

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

The original Okami is a tough act to follow. Directed by Hideki Kamiya and developed at the beloved—yet now-defunct—Clover Studio, it's one of the most beautifully crafted and universally acclaimed video games of the past decade. Now here we have a sequel from a whole new team on a technologically inferior piece of hardware. It's hardly surprising, then, that Okamiden falls short of the lofty standards set by its predecessor. On the other hand, this is a fine effort in its own right, and one that every fan of the first title should absolutely experience.

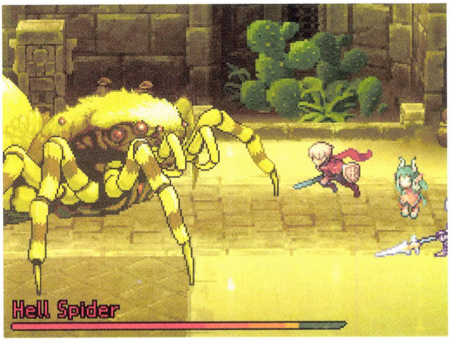
Okamiden is set approximately nine months after the events of that game, and sees wolf cub deity Chibiterasu—son of previous protagonist Amaterasu —arriving in Nippon to rid the land of a new demon scourge. Like his mother, Chibi has a Celestial Brush that he can use to manipulate his surroundings in all sorts of useful ways. Painting a circle in the sky makes the sun come out, for instance, while dragging the brush across enemies cuts them asunder. This trademark aspect of the franchise is a natural fit for the Nintendo DS touch screen, and Okamiden is less finicky than its console forerunner about interpreting your intentions for each stroke. Over the course of the adventure, your repertoire of brush techniques continually expands, piling on additional layers of depth in a way reminiscent of the tools in The Legend of Zelda. Unfortunately, Okamiden isn't especially creative about introducing new ways to use the brush, which seems like a missed opportunity.

As before, the Zelda similarities extend to the game's overall structure, dividing things between an overworld and "dungeons." The former is largely unchanged from that of the first Okami (it is the same place, after all), but each of the dungeons is entirely fresh. They're also impressively varied, and the occasional chase scene or side-scrolling sequence does a nice job of switching things up. Don't expect much of a challenge, though. Battles are typically a breeze—with only a couple of bosses posing a legitimate threat—and the game holds your hand far too much during puzzle sequences that aren't especially difficult to begin with.

Okamiden suffers from a few pacing issues, as well. There's a significant portion of the game that has you spending lots of time traveling back and forth between different areas, only to accomplish some brief, menial task at each stop. Other segments bunch together cutscenes to the extent that you're spending the better part of 30 minutes watching people talk. To make matters worse, these lengthy expositions can't be paused, which is inexcusable for a portable game.

The story they tell is worthwhile, though. After taking a little bit of time to pick up steam, it eventually hooks you and offers some genuinely poignant moments with an endearing (and—it must be said—adorable) cast of characters. Then just when you think the game is winding down, a very cool twist suddenly takes things in a surprising new direction. The localization is rock-solid for the most part, though the westernized slang that some of the characters use is off-putting when you're dealing with a narrative steeped in Japanese mythology.

Of course, no discussion of this series is complete without mentioning its wonderfully distinctive visual style, and Okamiden does an amazing job of bringing that aesthetic to a considerably less powerful system. The results are a joy to behold, even with occasional bouts of slowdown. All in all, the new development team deserves kudos for a job well done. This is one of those sequels that fans never thought would happen, so even if it doesn't quite measure up to its legendary predecessor, we're thankful to have it. **—STEVE T.**



Historical Perspective

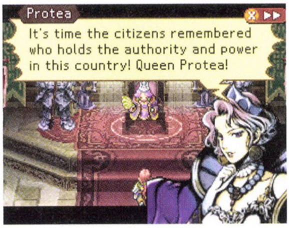
RADIANT HISTORIA

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **ATLUS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

In many ways, Radiant Historia is a deluxe-model role-playing game. It has just about everything you'd expect in a solid Japanese RPG—cartoony graphics, a quality soundtrack, turn-based battles, an ensemble of diverse characters, and a traditional level-up system—plus it offers plenty of distinguishing features to separate it from the pack.

It all starts with Radiant Historia's time-travel hook—a magical tome called the *White Chronicle* that permits protagonist Stocke to warp to crucial points within his own life to make decisions that reshape the future. Aside from allowing you to try again after you've made a choice that leads to a premature bad ending (yes, the choices you make in this game *are* often meaningful), the *White Chronicle* provides an excuse to let you jump back and forth between two parallel realities. Each one of the realities offers a story that would have made for fine RPG fodder on its own, but when twisted together they provide one of the most unique and complex (but not overly complex) narratives of any game out there. (It also helps that the mature story is driven by personal mysteries and a web of political intrigue rather than typical fantasy clichés.) Some could argue that the game's time-travel aspect is underused—you aren't adventuring in other time periods, Chrono Trigger-style, so much as you are jumping between storylines when you need a solution to an otherwise unsolvable problem—but it's nonetheless fun, and there are tons of worthwhile side quests that make reality-hopping more than just a plot point.

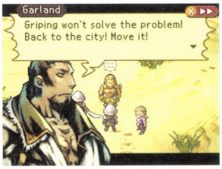

Protea
It's time the citizens remembered who holds the authority and power in this country! Queen Protea!

The battle system is another outstanding feature. In a lot of RPGs, it's easy to zone out and robotically button-mash your way through combat, but not so here; simply attacking (or using a spell against) your opponents won't get you very far. Enemies are positioned on a nine-panel grid, and you'll have to knock them into each other to set up chain reactions and combos that allow you to strike multiple foes at once to keep the battle in your favor. As a result, almost every fight is thoroughly absorbing.

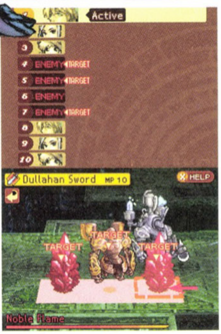
There's a lot to hold your interest outside of battle, too. Thanks to an evolving set of abilities, you're able to push heavy boxes, set explosives to create new paths, cut down obstacles, turn invisible to avoid enemy detection, stun foes before you engage them in battle, and more.

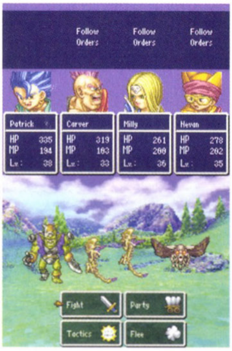
In a few respects, though, Radiant Historia could use more polish. As good as the story is, the characterization is somewhat lacking, and there's little reason to take anyone outside of your initial three heroes into battle. The game has some weird difficulty spikes, as well, and you often find yourself forced to repeatedly travel through the same locales. The shop interface could be improved, too. On the plus side, the footstep sound effects seem to have been toned down when compared to the Japanese version.

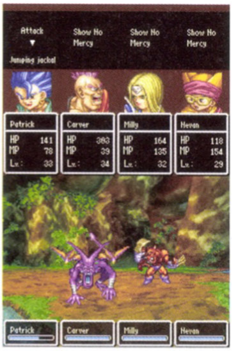
Overall, however, Radiant Historia is an excellent game. If you're a fan of Japanese RPGs and are looking for a serious adventure that goes above and beyond the norm, this title is well worth experiencing. —**CHRIS H.**


Garland
Griping won't solve the problem! Back to the city! Move it!

[Above] When griping fails, gratuitous use of sword skills and magic usually gets the job done.







DQVI's story is a winner, but if it weren't for bad hairstyles and silly hats, your comrades wouldn't have any personality at all.

Mystery Quest

DRAGON QUEST VI: REALMS OF REVELATION

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **ARTEPIAZZA**
ESRB: **TEEN**

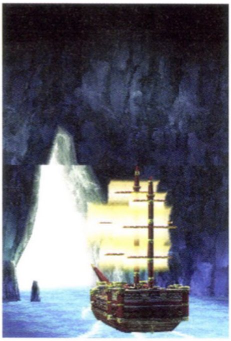
If Dragon Quest VI had been promptly localized into English after its 1995 Japanese release, it might have won a treasured place in the hearts of Super NES owners. Its detailed graphics were among the best on the platform, it revived and enhanced the series's popular job system, and its story marked an ambitiously twisty turn for a series that had become notorious for tired RPG tropes. But it's hard for anything to stay relevant for 15-plus years, and while Dragon Quest VI remains a thoroughly enjoyable game, there is no longer anything particularly remarkable about it.

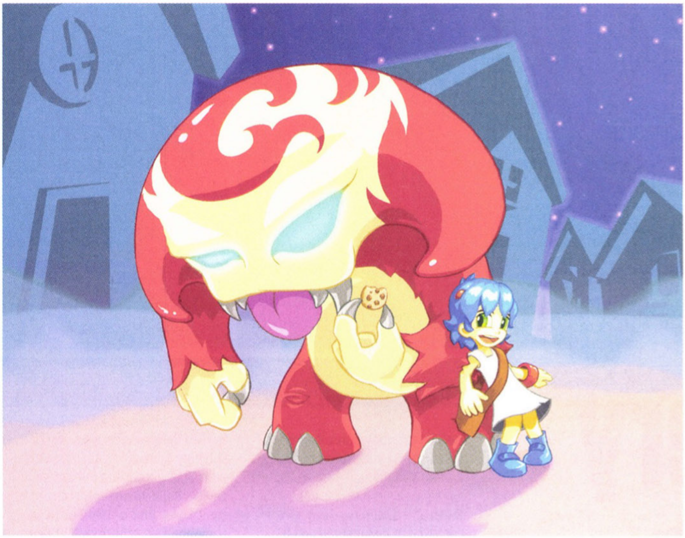
Dragon Quest VI's chief claim to fame is a unique storyline about a group of heroes who discover a parallel realm that differs from their own in subtle and mysterious ways. The interplay between the two worlds inspires all sorts of interesting quests, and there are plenty of "aha!" moments as players puzzle out the secrets of its origin. This is easily one of the series's strongest plots, although it's somewhat marred by a dull and thinly written cast.

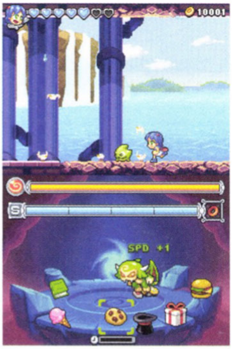
The developers of Dragon Quest VI also added scores of new abilities to the job system last seen in Dragon Quest III and made it much easier to create hybrid characters who excel at multiple jobs. This system is hardly revolutionary, but it does add a layer of strategic depth to a series that previously allowed players to zip through all but the toughest of boss encounters by mashing the A Button to attack, attack, attack. To make these new features matter, the difficulty has been boosted; Dragon Quest VI offers a more satisfying level of challenge than its predecessors.

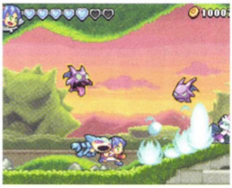
A sci-fi-flavored story, a deeper character-development system, and various explorable worlds should have been enough to make Dragon Quest VI feel fresh and distinctive. But a lazy remake job has instead left it feeling nearly indistinguishable from the DS versions of DQIV and DQV. Players of the previous remakes will be bored by the endlessly repeated town, dungeon, and tower designs, and the multitude of new jobs and skills aren't enough to make the otherwise identical battle system look or feel much different. The lack of new content is another sign of a half-hearted effort; while the DS versions of DQIV and DQV added some significant new content to their respective quests, the only bonus of note in DQVI is a brief slime-curling minigame. Of course, if you haven't played the DS versions of DQIV or DQV, the excessive repetition between the three games won't be an issue. But if you are new to the series, you should probably track down a copy of the superior Dragon Quest V: Hand of the Heavenly Bride instead.

Dragon Quest VI marks an interesting chapter in the series's evolution, and is a legitimately entertaining game for those who appreciate the straight-to-the-point storytelling and intuitive mechanics of SNES-era RPGs. But is it a timeless classic that demands a spot in any RPG fan's library? Probably not. **—CASEY L.**









Monster Mashup

MONSTER TALE

RATING: 8.0

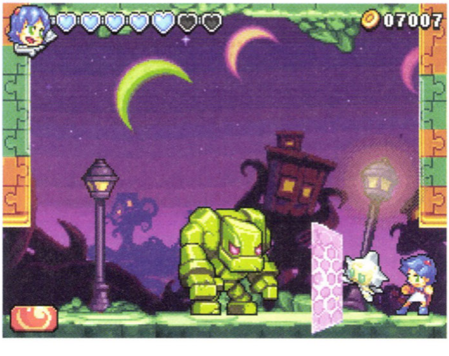
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **DREAMRIFT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

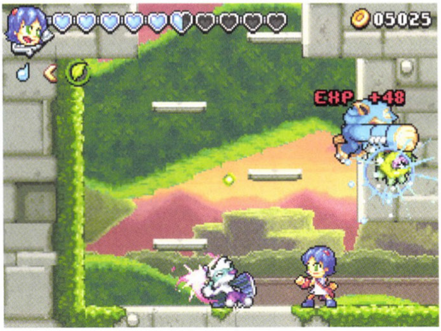
Cynical gamers might be quick to dismiss Monster Tale due to its rather generic title and its box art, which depicts a cute young girl and a slightly goofy-looking monster. To the untrained eye, it might appear to be some sort of Pokémon clone aimed at little kids. Making such assumptions, however, could cause you to miss out on a great game.

Monster Tale is the first game from DreamRift, a company founded by two of the main minds behind EA's popular Nintendo DS title Henry Hatsworth and the Puzzling Adventure. Given how enjoyable Hatsworth was, it's little surprise that Monster Tale turned out to be good fun. The game is structured along the lines of Metroid or the portable Castlevania titles. Instead of individual levels, you are dropped into a large, open world that you're able to freely explore. Certain areas cannot be reached until you discover a power-up item that allows you to access them. Additionally, there's another aspect to the game. While you're exploring the world on the top screen, the bottom screen acts as a sort of monster-raising simulator called the Pet Sanctuary. There you'll tend to your little monster's needs, teaching him new moves and guiding him through his evolutionary process.

The star of the game is a girl named Ellie, who has been mysteriously transported to the Monster World. She soon befriends a legendary (yet adorable) monster named Chomp and runs afoul of the not-at-all-nice Queen Priscilla and her followers, the Kid Kings. Thanks to the fantastic sprite artwork and the smooth animation, the characters are all extremely charming. Even the minor enemies are filled with personality, and the bosses—giant monsters that are usually controlled by a Kid King—are a treat to watch.

As you progress through the adventure, you'll quickly discover how important the monster-raising portion of the game is to the overall experience. This isn't simply a tacked-on mode—Chomp is essentially a weapon that must be carefully upgraded and used at the proper moment in order to effectively take down the enemy. Determining when to have Chomp chill in his sanctuary, when to have him fight alongside Ellie, and which evolutionary form of his to level up adds an unexpected level of depth that helps keep the action





[Above] While Ellie focuses on one foe, Chomp takes out an enemy that's sneaking up from behind. The girl-and-monster pairing is quite a team!

MY PET MONSTER

Chomp is way more than a lovable sidekick—he's a valuable ally in the battle against enemy monsters. He requires proper care if you're to help him grow into a powerful fighter. Fallen foes will occasionally drop items that you can send to the Pet Sanctuary on the bottom screen. Send Chomp down there, and he'll consume the item to earn experience points and stat boosts. Chomp can also fight alongside Ellie. Although he will attack foes on his own, it's much more effective to sic the little guy on enemies, thanks to his arsenal of special skills (via the DS handheld's L and R Buttons). Chomp also has about 30 evolutionary forms, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Experiment and find the form that works best with your fighting style.

fresh. It also doesn't hurt that Chomp is so darn cute, even in his most menacing forms.

In addition to leveling up Chomp, Ellie is constantly learning new abilities by finding power-up-bearing statues throughout the world and by purchasing upgrades from a wandering shopkeeper. Don't get too greedy with upgrades, however. At one point in the latter half of the game, Ellie is forced to pay nearly 3,000 gold (a fairly significant amount in this world) to the shopkeeper to clear a snow-blocked path. If you're careless with your cash, you may find yourself unable to progress until you do an extensive amount of gold-farming, which is never fun.

Just like in most games from the Metroid mold, there's an inherent thrill in being presented with a vast world through which to travel. The excitement of uncovering new areas and discovering what secrets await behind all of those empty spaces on your map screen really encourages you to continue playing. The Monster World sports a nice variety of areas, too, so the scenery is always fresh. One minute you might be running across the beach, only to wind up trekking across a snow-covered plain the next. Then, of course, there's the night club that all the party monsters frequent.

Despite the large world and many different locales, Monster Tale's biggest flaw lies within its map design. The world's structure requires ample backtracking across previous areas in order to progress. Granted, in this type of game there's always going to be some backtracking. After all, as you earn new skills you must journey back to old areas in order to take advantage of these powers to access new places. However, the Monster World is designed in such a way that you often seem to be simply running back and forth from one end of the map to the other. Likewise, Ellie's new abilities seldom open up access to many new areas. Sure, one or two moves grant access to a couple of small spots off the beaten path, but on the whole Ellie's journey feels oddly linear for a game that's about exploration.

As you tread through familiar territory, the constant attention you must pay to Chomp's well-being and growth help alleviate some of the repetition, but in a game like this, your first thought upon finding a new technique should be, "Oh, boy! Look at all these areas of the map that I can go travel to," not, "Ugh...I gotta go all the way back *there*?" Fortunately, this becomes less of a problem as a number of new areas spring up toward the end of the game, but the world layout is a notable blemish in an otherwise outstanding game. And yes, Monster Tale is pretty outstanding. Sure, you might grow a little tired of the backtracking after a few hours, but by focusing on upgrading Ellie and Chomp's powers, you'll still have a blast. **—PHIL T.**

REVIEWS ARCHIVE

THE COMPLETE LIST OF NINTENDO POWER REVIEWS FROM THE PAST YEAR

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa	6.5	Electronic Arts	254	E
All Star Karate	7.0	THQ	255	E10+
Arc Rise Fantasia	7.5	Ignition	256	T
Attack of the Movies 3D	4.0	Majesco	255	T
Avatar: The Game	5.0	Ubisoft	250	T
Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Video Game	7.0	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Reflex	9.0	Activision	249	M
Calling	5.0	Hudson	253	T
Create	5.0	Electronic Arts	262	E
Data East Arcade Classics	6.5	Majesco	252	T
Deca Sports 3	4.5	Hudson	261	E
Despicable Me: The Game	4.0	D3Publisher	258	E10+
DJ Hero	8.5	Activision	249	T
DJ Hero 2	9.0	Activision	262	T
Donkey Kong Country Returns	8.5	Nintendo	262	E
Endless Ocean: Blue World	7.5	Nintendo	252	E10+
Epic Mickey	8.5	Disney	263	E
FIFA Soccer 11	8.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	8.0	Square Enix	250	T
FlingSmash	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Flip's Twisted World	6.0	Majesco	260	E
Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	5.5	XSEED	253	T
GoldenEye 007	8.5	Activision	262	T
Green Day: Rock Band	8.0	MTV	256	T
Guilty Party	7.0	Disney	259	E
Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock	8.0	MTV	261	T
Gunblade NY & LA Machineguns Arcade Hits Pack	5.5	Sega	259	T
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows—Part 1	4.0	Electronic Arts	262	T
Iron Man 2	4.0	Sega	256	T
Ivy the Kiwi?	7.5	XSEED	259	E
Jambo! Safari	3.5	Sega	250	E
Kirby's Epic Yarn	8.5	Nintendo	261	E
The Last Airbender	6.0	THQ	257	T
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	7.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	257	E10+
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	6.5	LucasArts	249	E10+
LEGO Rock Band	8.0	Warner Bros. Interactive	249	E10+
Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole	4.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	T
Lost In Shadow	8.0	Hudson	263	E10+
Madden NFL 11	8.5	Electronic Arts	258	E
Major League Baseball 2K10	7.0	2K Sports	253	E
Mario Sports Mix	8.0	Nintendo	264	E
Metroid: Other M	8.5	Nintendo	259	T
Michael Jackson: The Experience	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Monster Hunter Tri	9.0	Capcom	254	T
MySims Skyheroes	7.5	Electronic Arts	260	E10+
Namco Museum Megamix	5.0	Namco Bandai	261	E
Naruto Shippuden: Clash of Ninja Revolutuon 3	7.5	Tomy	249	T
Naruto Shippuden: Dragon Blade Chronicles	4.5	Tomy	262	E10+
NBA 2K11	6.5	2K Sports	261	E
NBA Jam	9.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
Need for Speed Nitro	7.0	Electronic Arts	249	E10+
New Super Mario Bros. Wii	9.0	Nintendo	249	E
NHL Slapshot	6.0	Electronic Arts	259	E
No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle	9.0	Ubisoft	252	M
Pac-Man Party	4.5	Namco Bandai	262	E10+
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Gottlieb Collection	6.5	Crave	251	E
Pirates Plundarrr	4.0	Majesco	255	E10+
PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	8.0	Ubisoft	255	T
Pro Evolution Soccer 2010	8.0	Konami	250	E
Rabbids Go Home	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E10+
Racquet Sports	6.5	Ubisoft	253	E
Raving Rabbids Travel In Time	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Red Steel 2	8.0	Ubisoft	254	T
Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles	8.0	Capcom	249	M
Rock Band 3	9.0	MTV	261	T
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	7.5	NIS America	253	T
Sam & Max: Beyond Time and Space	8.0	Atari	255	T
Samurai Warriors 3	6.0	Nintendo	260	T
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	7.0	Capcom	261	T
Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E
Shiren the Wanderer	6.5	Atlus	252	T
Sid Meier's Pirates!	8.5	2K Games	260	E10+
Sin and Punishment: Star Successor	9.0	Nintendo	257	T
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces	7.0	XSEED	250	T
Sonic Colors	9.0	Sega	261	E
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	8.0	Sega	252	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	8.0	Activision	260	T
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	5.0	LucasArts	249	T
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	8.0	LucasArts	261	T
Super Mario All-Stars	9.0	Nintendo	263	E
Super Mario Galaxy 2	9.5	Nintendo	256	E
Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll	5.5	Sega	252	E
Swords	5.0	Majesco	260	T

MORE ON:

SUPER MARIO ALL-STARS

Even though I own the original Super NES edition of Super Mario All-Stars, I still get a little giddy whenever I spot the Wii version of this classic Mario collection on modern-day store shelves. Sure, the menus (taken directly from the Super NES game) could have used some snazzing up, and it would have been nice for the included booklet and music CD to have had more substance, but as long as I can kick back and use my Wii console to enjoy graphically enhanced versions of the games that made Mario famous, I'm a happy plumber. Not many copies of Super Mario All-Stars were made, however, so if you missed out, tracking one down could be tough. —CHRIS S.

MARIO
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WORLD
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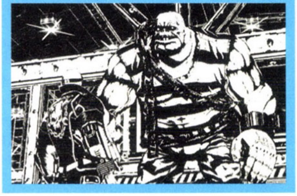
TIME
229

MORE ON:

MADWORLD

A recent playthrough of the M-rated MadWorld cemented the game in my mind as one of the top five non-Nintendo offerings ever on Wii. The ultraviolent beat-'em-up from the crazed minds at Platinum Games is just stupid, over-the-top fun for anyone of the appropriate age. It's a real shame that this one didn't find a larger audience. —STEVE T.



Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars	9.0	Capcom	251	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	9.0	Electronic Arts	256	E
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	6.0	Ubisoft	262	T
Tournament of Legends	7.0	Sega	257	T
Toy Story 3: The Video Game	7.5	Disney	257	E10+
Transformers: Cybertron Adventures	5.0	Activision	258	T
Trauma Team	8.0	Atlus	255	T
TRON: Evolution–Battle Grids	6.5	Disney	263	E10+
Wii Party	7.5	Nintendo	260	E
Worms: Battle Islands	7.0	THQ	264	E10+
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2011	7.5	THQ	262	T

Nintendo DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	8.0	Capcom	252	T
Again	7.0	Tecmo Koei	253	T
Assassin's Creed II: Discovery	7.0	Ubisoft	250	T
Atari's Greatest Hits Vol. 1	5.0	Atari	261	E
ATV Wild Ride	7.0	Destineer	264	E
Avatar: The Game	5.0	Ubisoft	250	E10+
Beat City	8.5	THQ	254	E
Bejeweled Twist	8.5	PopCap	251	E
Blue Dragon: Awakened Shadow	7.5	D3Publisher	256	E10+
Bookworm DS	8.5	PopCap	249	E
C.O.P. The Recruit	4.0	Ubisoft	249	T
Crafting Mama	7.0	Majesco	261	E
Crime Scene	5.0	SouthPeak	253	M
Dawn of Heroes	7.5	Majesco	253	E10+
Deca Sports DS	5.5	Hudson	253	E
Dementium II	8.0	SouthPeak	255	M
Despicable Me: The Game–Minion Mayhem	7.0	D3Publisher	258	E
Dragon Ball: Origins 2	8.0	Namco Bandai	256	T
Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies	9.0	Nintendo	257	E10+
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City	8.5	Altus	260	E10+
Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light	8.0	Square Enix	260	E10+
Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective	9.0	Capcom	263	T
Glory of Heracles	7.0	Nintendo	251	E10+
Golden Sun: Dark Dawn	8.0	Nintendo	262	E10+
Harvest Moon: Grand Bazaar	6.0	Natsume	258	E
Infinite Space	8.0	Sega	253	T
Iron Man 2	6.5	Sega	256	E10+
Ivy the Kiwi?	7.0	XSEED	259	E
Kingdom Hearts Re:coded	8.0	Square Enix	263	E10+
The Last Airbender	7.5	THQ	257	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks	9.5	Nintendo	250	E10+
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	5.0	LucasArts	249	E10+
Lufia : Curse of the Sinistrals	8.0	Natsume	260	E10+
Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Mini-Land Mayhem!	7.5	Nintendo	262	E
Mega Man Zero Collection	9.0	Capcom	256	E
Naruto Shippuden: Naruto vs. Sasuke	5.0	Tomy	262	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Shinobi Rumble	6.0	Tomy	264	T
Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors	9.0	Aksys	262	M
Picross 3D	7.5	Nintendo	255	E
Plants vs. Zombies	9.0	PopCap	264	E10+
Pokémon HeartGold Version	9.5	Nintendo	253	E
Pokémon Ranger: Guardian Signs	7.0	Nintendo	260	E
Pokémon SoulSilver Version	9.5	Nintendo	253	E
Professor Layton and the Unwound Future	9.0	Nintendo	260	E10+
Puzzle Quest 2	7.5	D3Publisher	257	E10+
Rabbids Go Home	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E
Ragnarok DS	5.0	XSEED	252	E10+
River City Soccer Hooligans	7.0	Aksys	256	T
River City Super Sports Challenge	6.0	Aksys	258	T
Rooms: The Main Building	7.0	Hudson	253	E
Rune Factory 3: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	8.5	Natsume	262	E
Sands of Destruction	7.0	Sega	250	T
Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey	8.0	Atlus	253	M
Sonic Colors	7.5	Sega	261	E
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	6.0	Sega	252	E
Sonic Classic Collection	7.0	Sega	253	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	7.0	Activision	260	E10+
Squishy Tank	8.0	Natsume	253	E
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	5.5	LucasArts	249	E10+
Super Scribblenauts	8.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	261	E
Tetris Party Deluxe	8.5	Majesco	256	E
Transformers: War for Cybertron	7.0	Activision	258	E10+
TRON: Evolution	6.5	Disney	263	E10+
WarioWare D.I.Y.	8.5	Nintendo	253	E
WireWay	6.5	Konami	249	E

MORE ON:

PLANTS VS. ZOMBIES

I've been critical of tower-defense titles in the past, but the charming Plants vs. Zombies stands out as one of the best in the genre. Using an arsenal of flora to protect your home from waves of the invading undead is highly addictive—I found myself playing this game for hours at a time. My only complaint about the Nintendo DS version is that the animation and overall framerate could be better. —JUSTIN C.

Level 3-9
775
50
25
200
175
125

MORE ON:

KINGDOM HEARTS RE:CODED

I forgot to mention one important thing in my review of Kingdom Hearts Re:coded—be sure to turn the autojumping off! It just isn't precise enough to be worth the trouble. As long as you make that adjustment, Re:coded is an excellent game that provides a unique look at the Kingdom Hearts mythos. Even though the story covers familiar ground, the combat is a blast and the varied gameplay types (especially the turn-based battles) ensure that the action never gets stale. —CHRIS H.

COMMANDS L+
Firaga
Air Spiral
Curaga
Talk
MAX
HP

Cosplayer Michelle Perl proves that video games can have a positive influence.

COSPLAY

Inspired by Samus

Great costumes are just a small part of one reader's journey.

MEMORABLE video game characters help us suspend belief and embrace fantastical worlds and settings, and they can even help generate true emotional connections. But the power and poise of one reader's favorite Nintendo character—Samus Aran from the Metroid series—helped her bounce back from a family tragedy and address an unhealthy lifestyle, and later led her to create these costumes as tribute.

The story comes to us from Michelle Perl, a 25-year-old artist and college student from Brooklyn, New York. Following the loss of her mother to cancer in 2007, Perl sought a source of inspiration and purpose to emerge from the tragedy. "Devastated by her loss, I needed a source of inner strength to get through the hardship placed before me," she explains. "I wanted to make a vow of personal improvement to my mother, so I decided to target the one problem that had been causing me great distress for years—my weight."

According to Perl, unhealthy eating and lifestyle decisions resulted in her body weight of 200 pounds during high school, which resulted in poor self-esteem. Motivated by the loss, she started exercising regularly—both at a gym and with Wii Fit, where she tracked her progress—along with eating better and finding other ways to be physical in her daily life. By the time she constructed the Zero Suit costume seen here, she had dropped down to 110 pounds and shed 15 jean sizes—a tremendous accomplishment that she credits in part to Samus Aran.

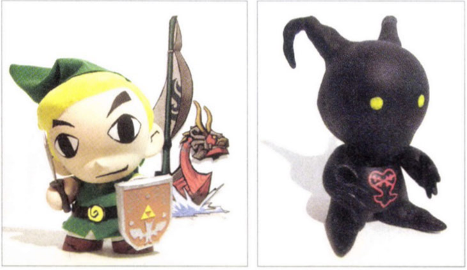
"My most powerful source of motivation to keep going was Samus Aran. I covered my room in all sorts of Metroid paraphernalia to keep my wheels spinning," explains Perl. "Samus is an ideal role model not just to me, but for many women to look up to as a powerful female icon. In a video game realm with princesses aplenty, Samus stands out as an atypical Nintendo gal holding the title of one of gaming's strongest symbols of courage, power, and heroism."

With a positive self-image established, Perl decided to create these two costumes—Samus's Zero Suit from Metroid: Zero Mission and Super Smash Bros. Brawl, and the secret "Justin Bailey" suit from the original Metroid—as a tribute to the iconic character and testament to Perl's progress. For the Zero Suit, pictured with a handmade Metroid plush by Sarah M. from www.StudioKitsu.net, Perl customized a spandex bodysuit using a paint stick and extra material taken from the suit. The Justin Bailey outfit, meanwhile, required a bit more original construction, due to the cardboard-and-foam arm cannon.

Perl hopes her story can help others overcome adversity and face tough tasks by turning to an unlikely source of inspiration. "I've learned that using something that you love as motivation to tackle a challenge is a rewarding way to reach success," she says. "Sometimes, even a fictional character is enough to give you a powerful dose of inner strength."

—ANDREW H.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY VINCENT GENTILE AND MICHAEL TURCHIO



When toy manufacturers don't make the toys you want, make your own. Sure, it requires some work, but the results can be quite impressive.

FANDOM

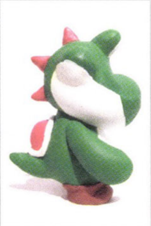
So Munny!

Creativity and ingenuity transform blank figures into icons.

WHEN LONGTIME READER Sydnee Davidson received one of Kidrobot's customizable Munny vinyl toys for her birthday, she wanted to make sure the seven-inch blank figure was put to great use. The 26-year-old graphic designer racked her brain for a bit to come up with a character that would be a perfect fit for the cartoonlike proportions of the toy. "I realized that Link from The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker would work just right," explains Davidson. "After that, my mind started racing, thinking of all the details and accessories I could do for him."

Davidson's custom Munny not only captures the essence of the beloved hero, but also shows a lot of ingenuity. Link's hair is made of Sculpey clay, which was baked onto the vinyl toy, and felt used for his tunic and hat. The handle of his sword comes from an extra IKEA furniture peg, with cardstock used to form the blade and shield, the latter of which uses chipboard cutouts to add dimensionality to the piece. "Some people may wonder why I hang onto scrap material," admits Davidson. "Now they know."

Link isn't her only custom vinyl creation, though—Davidson also created an impressive Yoshi from a Kidrobot Bub figure, using Sculpey for his face, spikes, shell, and other details before applying a liberal amount of green paint. She also made a Shadow Heartless figure from the Kingdom Hearts series by using a similar process on another Munny figure. Davidson says she has a secret plan involving a Munny Mobile car, should she find one of the discontinued toys, but she wouldn't spill the beans. An epic custom Mario Kart, perhaps? **—ANDREW H.**



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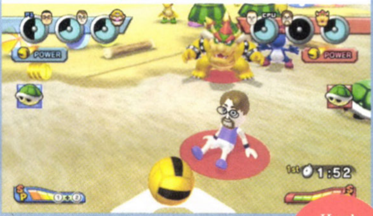
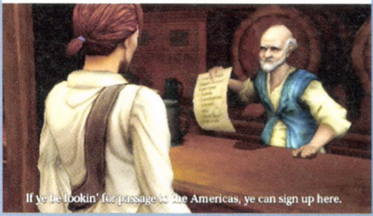


Justin, Steve, and Wario would later rue the day that they hassled the Hoff.

Here's our caption.
THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 263'S SHOT



If ye be lookin' for passage to the Americas, ye can sign up here.

"Can I have a milkshake and a side of fries with that?" **—DRAGUNITYGAMER911**

"Well, you better sign up for the passage to the tailor as well. Your saddlebag is sticking to your shirt." **—BRANDON F**

"Um, I have eight badges—can I go to the Kanto region instead?" **—MICKEYISEPIC**

"An awkward moment ensued once the bartender was told that this *was* America." **—RYAN COE**

"I'm sorry, is this the travel agency? I just assumed by the way your sign said 'Bar' that this was a place where I could get a drink. Terribly sorry." **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

"Do I pay extra for insurance in case we fall off the edge of the world?" **—POKÉFAN ANDREA**

"Isn't that just Guybrush Threepwood's copyright complaint?" **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

ABOVE *and* BEYOND

Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!

NEXT MONTH

The April issue of Nintendo Power will stuff mailboxes just as the Nintendo 3DS system hits store shelves, so we'll celebrate the handheld's arrival with loads more coverage, including reviews of the world's first-ever portable 3D games. Plus, we'll spend plenty of pages on the new eye-popping entry in the Mature-rated Resident Evil series, Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D. (Seriously, this is a *handheld* game? Thank you, Nintendo 3DS!)

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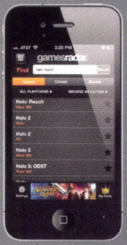
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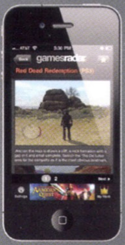
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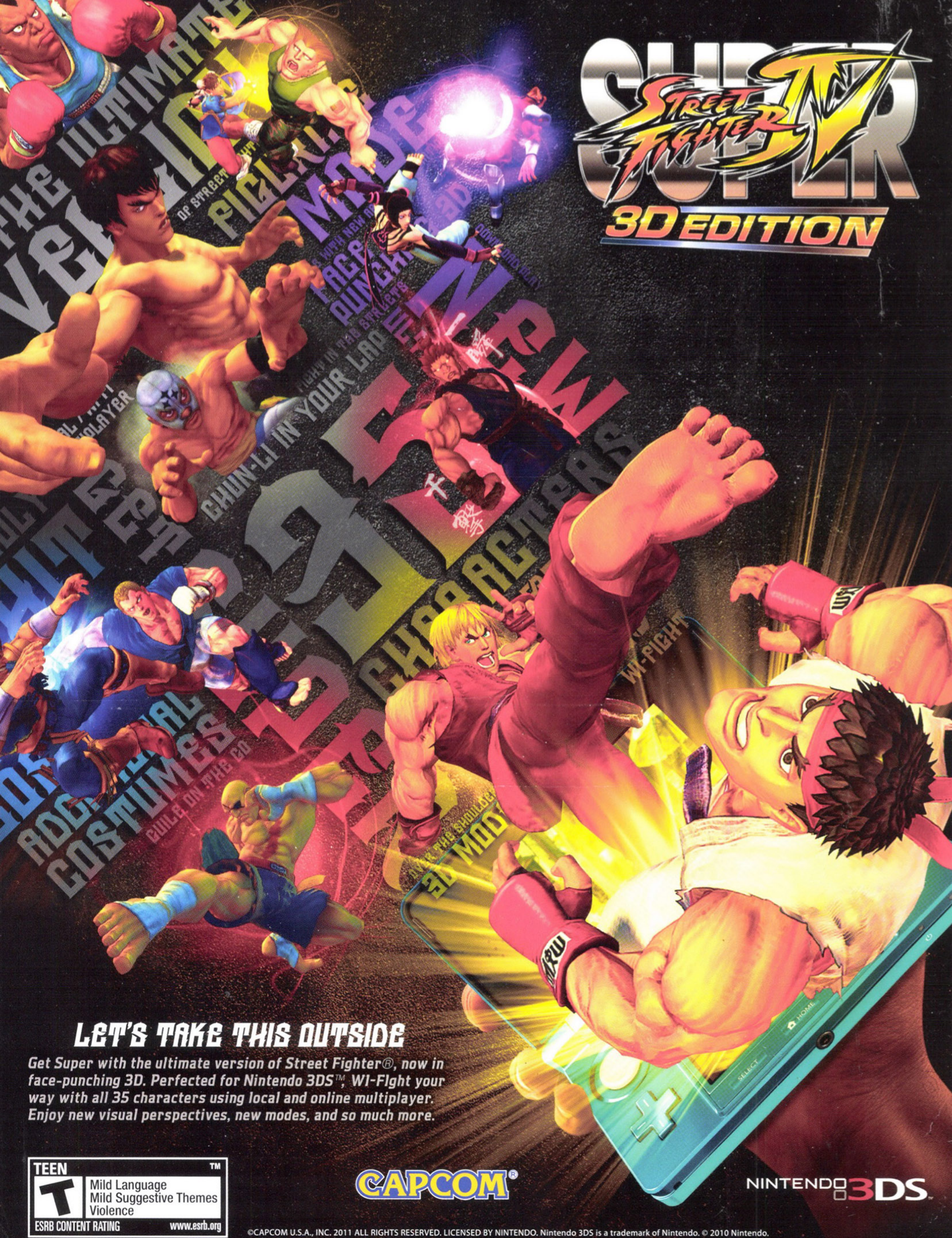
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